



A WILL ETERNAL

BOOK 04

Er Gen

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A Will Eternal

(一念永恒)

by

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Synopsis

One will to ceate oceans. One will to summon the mulberry fields.

One will to slaughter countless devils. One will to eradicate innumerable immortals.

Only my will... is eternal.

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Book 4: A Different Kind Of Hostage!

Chapter 379: Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect

Beyond the Middle Reaches was the true eastern Heavenspan River, vast and majestic, so grand that it wasn't possible to see the end of it. It was an area so large that the entire Middle Reaches cultivation world couldn't even compare to it.

If you followed it along far enough, it reached the place where the river flowed out from the sea!

In that location was a waterfall so large and boundless that it virtually defied description. It was as tall as an enormous mountain, and so wide that it was impossible to see one end from the other. As the waters flew down, they transformed into the eastern Heavenspan River!

One could only imagine what existed at the top of that waterfall: the Heavenspan Sea!

The spiritual energy in the area was so strong that it also defied description; the spiritual energy of the Middle Reaches cultivation world couldn't even compare to it. This was the location of the sect headquarters of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Shockingly, that headquarters rose up from within the boundless mists at the bottom of the waterfall. Towering high above the waterfall itself were seven rainbows, which were organized into three levels.

The first level, and the highest, was made up of a single rainbow. The second level had two rainbows, one on the left and one on the right. Beneath them was the third level, made up of four rainbows lined up in a row....

Considering how enormous the waterfall itself was, it only made sense that the rainbows were even more majestic. Astonishingly, those seven rainbows were actually part of Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

Even from a distance, it was just barely possible to see countless indistinct figures flying back and forth through the air, making it very clear how enormous the sect was!

Furthermore, those rainbows were only part of the sect. Higher up, at the very top of the waterfall, was an enormous, ancient battleship!

It was pitch black, and emanated the most archaic of auras. There was something ghastly about it, and it was even possible to see ghostly figures inside, perhaps the reserve powers of the sect itself.

In addition to all that, there were four gigantic cities built on the banks of the Heavenspan River, two on each side.

Any one of those cities alone was larger than any of the four great sects of the Middle Reaches, and could clearly house millions upon millions of people. The mere sight of this sect would leave anyone completely shaken.

This was the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

At the base of the waterfall were four enormous cities.

Towering above the waterfall were seven rainbows.

And behind the waterfall was the Heavenspan Sea!

A moment ago, the enormous giant had just stepped out of thin air to appear some distance off from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Bai Xiaochun was on the giant's head, looking at the sect and gasping. The mere size of the sect was enough to cause his head to spin.

Then, as he got closer, he could feel the spiritual energy getting stronger, so strong that it was almost uncomfortable.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one to have such a reaction. Everyone else was left similarly gasping.

Master God-Diviner's face was a mask of incredulity. "How did

they do this? Rainbows are fundamentally immaterial, but that's what the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect actually built their headquarters with!"

"You're right," Chen Manyao said, keeping her voice low. "Rainbows are immaterial. However, experts in the Demigod Realm can take that which is immaterial and make it eternal!"

"Furthermore, the seven rainbows are strictly separated by a ranking system. From bottom to top, those ranks are: Starry, Sky, Dao, Polarity, Mortal, Earth, Heaven!"

"See the highest rainbow? That's Heaven! The next two below it are Earth and Mortal. The four rainbows which make up the bottom level are Starry, Sky, Dao, and Polarity!"

"We're from the River-Defying Sect, but technically, we count as the Sky River Court. Therefore, our final destination will be the second rainbow of the third level!" Bai Xiaochun listened intently as Chen Manyao explained everything she knew about the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

"Those four cities on the banks of the river are nothing more than the outer sect. You see, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's ranking system is a bit different from what we're used to." Even Gongsun Wan'er seemed to be surprised at how much Chen Manyao knew, and was listening carefully.

The Deva Realm boy opened his eyes and looked over. "You seem to know quite a bit, little girl."

Chen Manyao's face flickered. Fearful of angering a Deva Realm eccentric, she nervously clasped hands and said, "Please don't take offense, Senior."

"None taken," the boy said coolly. "The more you explain, the fewer words I have to waste in my own introduction. Listen up, all of you. Just as the girl said, the ranking and organization of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is different from that of most other

sects, and that's intentional.

“Most sects have an outer sect, an inner sect, a conclave, and a legacy echelon, or some variation thereof. But not the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. We are organized by color. Red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, violet. Those seven colors are how we organize our sect. It doesn't matter who you are, as long as you're under the Nascent Soul stage, you have to follow that ranking system. Everyone starts out as a red-robed disciple, and rises in the ranks, not based on cultivation base level, but based on how many merit points you accumulate!

“The more merit points you get, the higher your rank. Newcomers do not even qualify to step onto the rainbows. Only becoming yellow-robed disciples gives you that right, the right to be promoted from the ground to the rainbows.” As the boy talked, the giant strode forward, carrying them toward the second city on the left bank of the Heavenspan River, at the base of the waterfall.

“Very well, this city is where you will start out. As for where you end up later, that will depend on your own personal good fortune.” He rose to his feet, flicking his sleeve to send a jade slip flying over to Bai Xiaochun. “Take this jade slip. Once you're in the city, someone will arrange everything for you.” With that, he waved his sleeve again, causing a wave of power to pick Bai Xiaochun and the others up and fly them off of the giant's head. Then the giant roared, ripping open the sky in front of it and vanishing into the hole.

As for the boy, he also disappeared, reappearing out of sight, far up on the second level rainbow!

After the boy left, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. Then he looked over at the huge city, which teemed with countless people, beyond which was the enormous waterfall and the rainbows.

This place was gigantic, and completely unfamiliar to Bai Xiaochun, leaving him feeling more isolated than ever, a stranger

in a strange land.

“These four huge cities have simple names,” Chen Manyao said softly. “Starry City, Sky City, Dao City, and Polarity City. Once in the cities, don’t make the mistake of underestimating anyone. There could be people with powerful cultivation bases who simply don’t have enough merit points to rise beyond the level of being an orange-robed disciple.

“Remember, in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, everyone under the Nascent Soul stage is a disciple, and their ranking is based on the color of their robes, not their cultivation base. That is why Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect cultivators are often called seven-colored disciples!”

With Chen Manyao there to explain things, Bai Xiaochun and the others weren’t at such a loss even though they were newcomers to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Things were already starting to become clear.

“What are the requirements to reach the first and second level rainbows?” Gongsun Wan’er suddenly asked.

Chen Manyao had long since been very leery of Gongsun Wan’er, and thus, did absolutely nothing to conceal her knowledge.

“The first rainbow is also called the Heaven Rainbow, and is occupied by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s one and only demigod patriarch. Beneath it is the Earth Rainbow on the left and the Mortal Rainbow on the right. The Earth Rainbow is for the devas, and the Mortal Rainbow is for the sect leader. It is also the location of many trials by fire and special cultivation zones.

“Most terrifying of all is that ancient battleship at the very top of the waterfall, which actually rests on the Heavenspan Sea itself. All of the four riversource sects have a battleship like that, and they are boundlessly mysterious and infinitely powerful!” With that, she glanced over at Bai Xiaochun, clearly done with her explanation, and also obviously not planning to divulge any

information about the Wildlands.

Only she and Bai Xiaochun were aware of her involvement with the Wildlands, and he didn't plan to say anything either. As for Gongsun Wan'er, she merely smiled, and didn't ask any further questions.

"Well, let's go," Bai Xiaochun said with a sigh. "Now that we're here, we might as well find a place to settle down." With that, he headed toward the city, and everyone followed along.

As they neared the city itself, they sensed invisible fluctuations spreading over all of them. Bai Xiaochun took out the jade slip he'd been given, which began to glow with a bright light that was none other than teleportation power. Before anyone in the group of seven could react, they had vanished.

When they reappeared, they were in a grand hall somewhere in the middle of the city. As soon as they appeared, and before they could even see their surroundings clearly, an icy voice spoke out.

"Hostage Bai Xiaochun. Hostage Gongsun Wan'er. Within these bags of holding you will find identity medallions and red Daoist robes for both you and your Dao Protectors.

"From this day on, all of you are cultivators of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!" Two bags of holding appeared out of thin air and flew toward Bai Xiaochun and Gongsun Wan'er.

Before they had a chance to even open them, streams of power wrapped them up and threw them out of the hall. Moments later, they were out on the street. No one even spared them a second glance; apparently, they were used to people appearing like this.

Bai Xiaochun looked around blankly. Xu Baocai and Big Fatty Zhang were a bit pale-faced from the teleportation. Song Que and Master God-Diviner seemed to have handled it a bit better, and Chen Manyao didn't appear to be affected at all.

However, the cold reception from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity

Sect was something none of them were used to.

Feeling less than pleased with the treatment, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, looked back at the grand hall, and shouted, “Hey, I’m an important political hostage!”

Chapter 380: I'm Hungry

Bai Xiaochun's shout provoked no response from within the hall. Master God-Diviner and the others exchanged awkward glances. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was extremely displeased. After all, he was an important political hostage, a status that he felt should come with at least some level of respect.

"Right guys?!" he said, looking over angrily at Big Fatty Zhang and the others. "Come on, I'm an important political hostage!"

Big Fatty Zhang cleared his throat and looked left and right, but didn't say anything.

"Ah well, whatever. I guess this hostage will just have to rough it out. Alright guys, what should we do now?" Sighing, he looked over at Master God-Diviner.

"Um," Master God-Diviner began cautiously, "well... maybe we should check things out first before making any decisions." Xu Baocai and Big Fatty Zhang seemed to agree with him. Chen Manyao didn't say anything, and Gongsun Wan'er simply stood there with a slight smile on her face. As for Song Que, he looked just as grim as always, and didn't seem interested at all in even looking at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked around at everyone, and felt a headache coming on. He was already starting to regret bringing all these people with him. However, he couldn't change the situation now. Therefore, he decided to do just as Master God-Diviner had suggested, and began walking down the street in the city.

As he went along, he slowly forgot about his mistreatment from before. Soon, he began to gasp and let out exclamations of shock. He wasn't the only one to react in such a way; the others were similarly astonished by the things they saw.

After all, they were at the source of the entire eastern

Heavenspan River, and this city had an enormous population. Most of the people in the city were disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, but others were from various families and clans that had lived in the city for generations.

One of the strangest things that Bai Xiaochun realized was that he hadn't seen a single overweight person in the city so far. Everyone was skinny to the point of being gaunt. Some of them even looked like little more than skin and bones. Furthermore, everyone always seemed to be rushing about, as if they didn't want to waste even a bit of time. Another strange thing was that none of them revealed even the tiniest sliver of their cultivation base. Bai Xiaochun was a Gold Core cultivator, so he was able to pick up some clues here and there. However, most other cultivators would look around and see people who looked like nothing more than mortals.

Suppressing his curiosity about that, Bai Xiaochun focused on all the things that were for sale in the city. Just about anything could be bought, from spirit treasures to magical items to ancient books. There were all sorts of medicinal pills as well.

There was spirit food available, some of which was made from precious materials of heaven and earth. Other spirit foods were the meats of different types of wild beasts. The prices for the spirit foods were astronomical, and yet to the surprise of Bai Xiaochun and his companions, people still would buy them, although it always seemed to be with some level of reluctance.

Bai Xiaochun had never seen such a bustling city before, nor had any of his companions. Thus, they took their time strolling through the city, slowly taking in all the sights and sounds.

As time passed, they were convinced of one thing... prices in the city were simply beyond belief. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had been given a sizeable sum of spirit stones back in the River-Defying Sect, but even with what he had, it only took a quick calculation on his part to come to the conclusion that he didn't have enough to buy

any of the things he really wanted.

After a few hours of wandering the city, the entire group came to another shocking realization: for some reason, all of them were very hungry!

This development caused their eyes to grow wide. After all, once cultivators reached Foundation Establishment, they didn't need to consume physical food. Instead, they subsided on spiritual energy alone.

But as of this moment... a sensation of profound hunger had risen up within all of them.

“What’s going on...? I’m... I’m hungry!” Bai Xiaochun rubbed his belly and then looked over at Chen Manyao with a confused expression on his face.

Chen Manyao was also clearly taken aback. After a moment of thought, she pulled out a jade slip which she used to send a message to someone. After a moment, an odd expression appeared on her face. Looking around at her companions, she hesitated, then said, “Did any of you notice... that your cultivation bases have progressed already?”

Everyone quickly checked their cultivation bases, and sure enough, it was just as Chen Manyao had said. They hadn't experienced huge advancements, but the evidence was there; they had just been so entranced by the bustling city that they hadn't noticed.

Chen Manyao went on to explain, “Considering how close we are to the Heavenspan Sea, the spiritual energy is especially strong, and after entering our bodies, it throws our five yin organs into chaos. Although it causes our cultivation bases to advance more quickly, it's also very draining on us.... That's why we're feeling hungry. Essentially... the energy drain is so severe that we can't sustain our cultivation without eating normal food.”

Even as Chen Manyao explained the situation, Bai Xiaochun's stomach began to grumble loudly.

When she finished speaking, his face fell. Other than death, the thing he feared most in life was hunger. Back on Fragrant Cloud Peak when he had begun to practice the Undying Live Forever Technique, he had almost starved to death. After reaching Foundation Establishment, he had never felt the pangs of hunger, but now, here they were rising up again.

Chen Manyao smiled bitterly and said, "Furthermore, I just asked... a friend of mine, and was told that everyone in the city has to eat a huge amount of food every day to replenish their energy. Also, it has to be spirit food."

Big Fatty Zhang was already starting to get very nervous. Just like Bai Xiaochun, he feared hunger as if it were the shadow of death. "So... so does that mean we have to be eating constantly?"

"Once you become a yellow-robed disciple and get into the rainbow district, then the aura there will aid in your absorption of spiritual energy, and the problem will resolve itself naturally." Chen Manyao's brow was also furrowed because of the sensation of hunger she felt.

Gongsun Wan'er rubbed her belly, licked her lips, and then chuckled. "Well then, I think I'll go get something to eat. See you all later."

With that, she waved at them and melted into the crowd.

"Junior Patriarch, what do we do...?" Master God-Diviner said, looking at Bai Xiaochun. "I'm hungry too...."

Xu Baocai had the same reaction, and even grim-faced Song Que finally turned to look expectantly at Bai Xiaochun.

Rubbing his bag of holding anxiously, Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and said, "Let's just suck it up for now. We need to find a place to stay first, then we can worry about how to get something

to eat.”

The others agreed that it was a good idea. All of them produced some medicinal pills to temporarily relieve their hunger, and then began searching through the city for a place to stay.

Soon, they found the location where Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect disciples could get immortal's caves, which was when Bai Xiaochun learned that all the immortal's caves were rented out, not sold. After looking over the rent prices, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but gasp.

“This... this is way too expensive!”

The cultivator in charge was an orange-robed disciple, and all he did was look at Bai Xiaochun coldly, refusing to even say a word.

It was soon apparent from the incredible prices that only very wealthy people could afford immortal's caves here. Ordinary people had to settle for spirit abodes. Of course, the prices for spirit abodes were also very high.

Since they had few options available, Bai Xiaochun and his companions agreed to rent the cheapest spirit abode they could find. By the time they acquired the jade slip key and found the spirit abode in the city, it was starting to get dark outside.

It was located in the city's east district, and was very simple and crude. It actually reminded Bai Xiaochun of his residence back in the village when he was young. Furthermore, to his agony, renting it for half a year cost him half of the spirit stones he'd been given by the sect.

A whole day had been wasted already, and all of them were getting increasingly hungry. By this point, all of their stomachs were grumbling loudly. Sighing, Bai Xiaochun tossed the bag of spirit stones over to Master God-Diviner and told him to go find some food.

Master God-Diviner excitedly caught the bag of holding and then

rushed out, to return shortly with a large collection of spirit food which he divided out equally. Now that they had food, everyone sat around silently eating, wrapped up in their own thoughts.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he couldn't stop thinking about how much he missed the River-Defying Sect.

The night passed silently. The next day at dawn... Bai Xiaochun was awoken by the sound of his own grumbling stomach. Looking around at everyone else, he could tell that they already looked a bit skinnier than they had the day before.

“Dammit! What wickedness is this? How are we supposed to deal with this?!” It was a terrifying situation; he was so hungry he could hardly see straight. Producing more spirit stones, he asked Master God-Diviner to go out again to buy spirit food.

And that was how the first day passed. Then a second day went by, and a third, and a fourth....

During that time, everyone from the group went out to explore the city at some point, but would return frowning and the settle down cross-legged and unmoving, not willing to waste any energy.

Despite trying to save energy, all of them, Bai Xiaochun included, were started to get much thinner. That was especially true of Xu Baocai, who was already at the point of looking like skin and bones.

However, none of that was truly frightening. What scared them the most was that the bag of holding was on the verge of running out of spirit stones, most likely within two days.... Even Bai Xiaochun's personal bag of holding was almost ninety percent devoid of spirit stones.

“We have to think of a plan!” he said passionately, looking around at everyone with a serious look on his face. “Going on like this won't work. You guys are my Dao protectors! Go out and make some money!”

Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, Song Que rose to his feet, a look of determination flickering in his eyes, as well as a bit of madness. Bai Xiaochun looked at him curiously, and was just about to ask what he was going to do when Song Que blurted, “I’ve had enough of this!!

“Enough, do you hear me Bai Xiaochun? Dao protector? Forget it, I quit! Song Que can solve his own problems for himself. From now on, you’re on your own! It all comes down to the merit points, right? Maybe I wasn’t a match for you in the Blood Stream Sect, or in the River-Defying Sect, but here in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, I’m going to become a yellow-robed disciple on my own merit, and get promoted to the rainbow district!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes widened angrily, and he was just about to offer a retort, when suddenly Master God-Diviner rose to his feet....

Chapter 381: Out Of Options

Master God-Diviner gritted his teeth in hesitation for a moment before continuing, “Junior Patriarch.... Junior Patriarch, I’m leaving too. If we all stick around here, we’ll never solve the problem of being hungry. Look, why don’t you–”

At the sudden realization that everyone was apparently planning to go their own way, Bai Xiaochun shot to his feet.

“Don’t go, guys! You’re my Dao protectors! I brought you here with me! What am I supposed to do if you all leave...?” What was especially terrifying was the realization that the spirit stones the sect had given him were almost all gone. The fact that everyone was leaving at that point was what hurt the most.

“I brought you here with me! You’re supposed to take care of me....” Despite his protestations, Song Que simply snorted coldly, then turned and left. His plan was to go on some missions to earn the resources he needed to take care of himself.

“Que’er....” Bai Xiaochun called after him. However, Song Que didn’t even look over his shoulder. As for Master God-Diviner, he was getting ready to leave too, but Bai Xiaochun reached out and grabbed his arm.

“Master God-Diviner,” he said piteously, “I won’t call you Master Snortsnort anymore, okay? Don’t go....”

“Junior Patriarch, I don’t have any other choice. Before coming here, none of us had any idea that merely staying alive in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect would be so difficult. I think I’ll go start performing some divinations to get some food to eat....” Although his words were chosen well, inside, he was furious, and at the same time, couldn’t stop thinking about how much he missed the River-Defying Sect. Shaking himself out of Bai Xiaochun’s grip, he left the spirit abode and was gone in a flash.

“I can’t believe you people!” Bai Xiaochun said angrily. As far as he was concerned, Song Que and Master God-Diviner were being completely unreasonable. If they had gone out on their own earlier, it might have been tolerable, but instead, they waited until he ran out of spirit stones to abandon him.

Even as Bai Xiaochun stood there fuming, Chen Manyao sighed and stood up. Looking over at Bai Xiaochun, she said, “This is my fault for not getting complete information. Junior Patriarch, I’m going to go look for some friends of mine. If destiny will have it, we’ll meet again in the rainbow district.”

Without giving Bai Xiaochun a chance to respond, she flew out of the spirit abode.

Chen Manyao’s sudden departure pushed Bai Xiaochun toward the brink of madness. After all, she had come to him to ask to join the party, and now here she was just throwing him to the wayside. Thankfully, he could console himself with the fact that Xu Baocai and Big Fatty Zhang were staying behind.

“Hmph! Fine, if they want to go, let them go. At least Eldest Brother and Little Treasure have some loyalty!” Looking over at them, he slapped his chest and said, “Look you two, don’t worry, I’ll—”

However, that was when Xu Baocai rose awkwardly to his feet. “Junior Patriarch, I—”

“Hey what are you doing? Sit back down!” Heart pounding, Bai Xiaochun was just getting ready to physically block Xu Baocai’s path, when he noticed the look of determination in his eyes, as well as the tears.

“Junior Patriarch,” he pled, “let me go, please. I... I don’t want to die of starvation! Look at me! I’m the weakest of all of us, and I’m already skin and bones! If things keep going like this, I’m going to be the first one to die!

“Show me mercy, I beg of you! Let me go!

“Please, Junior Patriarch....” He even started tugging at Bai Xiaochun’s sleeve.

The anger faded from Bai Xiaochun’s face, and he sighed. “Alright, everyone has the right to pick their own path. Leave if you want!”

“Many thanks, Junior Patriarch!!” Eyes filled with gratitude, Xu Baocai fled the spirit abode.

As soon as he was outside, he caught sight of Master God-Diviner off in the distance. The two of them exchanged a glance, then joined together and headed off into the city, chuckling.

Looking quite proud of himself, Master God-Diviner produced a chunk of spirit meat from his bag of holding and started munching on it as he said, “Song Que has pretty high ambitions and isn’t very flexible. I bet he really did think that he was in a bad position. We’re different though. Finally, we’re free from the clutches of evil!”

Xu Baocai hesitated for a moment, then produced a similar chunk of spirit meat. After taking a bite, he said, “Are you sure this is a good idea though? After all, we’re still technically Dao protectors.”

Clearly, the two of them had quite a collection of resources built up. After all, for the past several days, all of the food they’d been eating had been provided by Bai Xiaochun.

Master God-Diviner hesitated for a moment. After a bit of thought, he said, “There’s nothing we can do about that. If we had stayed back there, we would still have gone hungry eventually anyway, what with the junior patriarch’s way of handling things. Don’t worry, let’s take care of ourselves first, and then we can meet back up with him when we get to the rainbow district.”

After a bit more chatting regarding their plans, the two of them headed off into the city to find their own place to stay.

As of this point, the only people left in the spirit abode were Bai Xiaochun and Big Fatty Zhang. Big Fatty Zhang looked at Bai Xiaochun standing there in anger, then sighed and closed his eyes to meditate.

Despite Bai Xiaochun's rage, there was nothing he could do about the situation. At least he had Big Fatty Zhang there to accompany him. However, the next day, not even Big Fatty Zhang could take it any longer. When evening fell, he walked over to Bai Xiaochun and said, "Ninth Fatty...."

Bai Xiaochun instantly started to get nervous. "Eldest Brother, are you—"

"Ninth Fatty, it's not that your Eldest Brother doesn't care about you. If things keep going like this, I'm gonna die. I'll go out to perform some spirit enhancements. Don't worry, Ninth Fatty, after I get some money built up, I'll come back and take care of you!" Big Fatty Zhang had clearly made his mind up, and Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything to try to change his mind.

Big Fatty Zhang clapped Bai Xiaochun on the shoulder, then took a deep breath, his eyes gleaming as if he had accepted a holy mission. With that, he walked out of the spirit abode....

Bai Xiaochun was the only person left. As the sun slowly sank down over the horizon, he stood outside the door looking more lonesome than ever. Finally, he let out a long sigh.

"Gone. They've all gone...." Crestfallen, he walked back into the spirit abode and sat down, his hunger growing.

"What am I supposed to do? I'm so hungry!" Considering that night was falling, he finally went out and used some of his dwindling spirit stone savings to buy some more spirit food. Then he looked around at all the red-robed disciples hurrying here and there on various missions.

Although some of the missions were dangerous, considering that

Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base was in the Gold Core level, they wouldn't pose any threat to him. However, the rewards for accomplishing such missions were small.

Based on his calculations, doing missions to survive would require him to do them almost all day every day. That was mostly because the high level of his cultivation base meant that the drain on his body was even more noticeable.

And of course, the missions with bigger rewards were the ones that were more dangerous.

Despite putting some thought to it, he couldn't come up with any good ideas. Sighing, he went back to his spirit abode. Back inside, the little turtle finally woke up and stuck his head out of Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding. He looked at Bai Xiaochun suspiciously, clearly wondering why he had been asleep so long. However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't in any mood to pay attention to him. Seeing how he was being ignored, the turtle's suspicions faded, and he disappeared back into the bag of holding.

A few more days passed. Bai Xiaochun went out into the city a few times to try to get inspiration for what to do. He completely suppressed his cultivation base, ensuring that no fluctuations whatsoever emerged from him, which also reduced the drain on his body.

However, no matter how many ideas he came up with, he found that there were already people in the city using those methods to earn merit points. Trying to compete with them would be pointless. He even tried to find some unique missions at the Missions Office suited to his style, but there were simply too many disciples there looking for missions.

By this point, he knew exactly why all of the people he had seen in the city were always thin and in a hurry, and also had such strange cultivation bases. The pressure weighing down on them on a daily basis created something like an instinct. Because of the

interference of the spiritual power, it was impossible to see who was powerful and who was weak.

“Don’t tell me that a majestic Gold Core cultivator like me is actually going to starve to death!!” he lamented. He was getting to the point that he was so hungry he couldn’t take it. His bag of holding was now completely devoid of spirit stones, and he was almost out of food. Soon, he would have nothing left to eat other than spirit plants.

Of course, he had plenty of those, because he was always equipped with numerous ingredients with which to concoct medicine. However, even if he sold them all, the merit points they would earn would vanish just as quickly as his spirit stones.

“I can’t keep going on like this, or I’m going to die! This Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is just too wicked! I can’t believe they treat their disciples so harshly! I’m a Gold Core expert! I’m an important political hostage! Don’t they even care that I’m starving to death!?!?” Depressed, he even considered resorting to theft. However, the punishment for theft in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was so severe that he quickly abandoned such thoughts.

“Alright, I’m out of options. I guess I’m going to have to use my best skill to solve this problem. I’m... I’m going to concoct medicine!”

Chapter 382: Ultra Fasting Aid Pill!

“Even if some disastrous things happen as a result, I don’t care. Things are already bad enough as it is. What do I have to be scared of? I’m gonna concoct some sort of medicine that prevents hunger long-term! In fact, I already came up with a name for it! Ultra Fasting Aid Pill!!” Eyes bloodshot, he slapped his bag of holding, producing a pill furnace, as well as some flamestones. Taking a deep breath to calm himself, he devoted all of his thoughts to the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill he wanted to concoct.

Some people in the world perform better under more pressure, and Bai Xiaochun was just that type of person. In fact, he was extraordinary even among people like that.

The truth was that surviving in this city wasn’t as hard as Bai Xiaochun imagined it to be, especially for Gold Core cultivators. In fact, it was relatively simple. All he had to do was take on a few relatively dangerous missions every once in a while, or do smaller, easier missions on a daily basis. Using either of those methods, it would only take a year or two to save up enough merit points to become a yellow-robed disciple and be promoted to the rainbow district. Of course, it would require a bit of frugality, but it was nothing undoable.

But Bai Xiaochun didn’t like danger, and didn’t want to do any missions. Only when he was so hungry that he could hardly see straight did the pressure build to the point where he finally exploded with creativity and innovation.

For the following four days, he didn’t rest or sleep. He ate what little food he had left, and even nibbled on some spirit plants, until finally, the pill formula for his Ultra Fasting Aid Pill came to be complete in his mind.

“My Ultra Fasting Aid Pill will be a concentration of the quintessence of heaven and earth! Upon consuming it, one will

receive temporary replenishment, will be relieved from the pressure caused by the draining of ordinary energy, and will even find that the spiritual power inside of their body has become gentler and easier to work with!” Bai Xiaochun was trembling with excitement, and although he was now quite gaunt, his eyes were shining brightly. Having completed the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill formula, he immediately began to concoct.

Six hours later, his first batch appeared, and although it only contained three pills, the mere odor emanating from them caused Bai Xiaochun’s hunger to lessen!

“Hahaha! I really am a genius. It worked! My Ultra Fasting Aid Pill worked!” Surging with excitement, he took the three pills out of the furnace, and was just about to consume them when he hesitated, and thought back to all the bizarre and strange things which had happened in the past when he had concocted medicine.

“Maybe it would be better to do some tests.” Gritting his teeth, he left his spirit abode, sold a few medicinal plants to get some merit points, and then went and bought a spirit chicken.

Back in his spirit abode, he gave one of the Ultra Fasting Aid Pills to the spirit chicken, then carefully watched to see what happened. After a full day passed, he was convinced that nothing had gone wrong, and that the spirit chicken was fine. At that point, his eyes blazed with excitement.

“Looks like I really did succeed!” He threw his head back and laughed uproariously, then went to work on the next batch. Before long, he had several dozen Ultra Fasting Aid Pills.

“Now that I think about it, it would be a waste for me to consume these pills myself. I actually like spirit food a lot better than medicinal pills.” After some thought, he decided to try to sell some of the pills. Filled with anticipation, he left the spirit abode yet again.

Instead of trying to sell the pills to one particular shop or

another, he went to one of the busiest public squares in the east district of the city, and after spending a bit of time, found a suitable location to set up a vendor's stand. After placing three pill bottles onto the stand, each of which containing a single pill, he sent some power from his cultivation base into a jade slip, causing it to send bright, multicolored light shining up into the air above him. Immediately, four brightly-glowing characters could be seen....

Ultra Fasting Aid Pill!

With that, he settled down to wait for customers.

It didn't take long. After all, the term 'Ultra Fasting Aid Pill' was quite eye-catching. Before long, people began to gather around him.

"Ultra Fasting Aid Pill? I've never heard of that medicinal pill before."

"Considering how things work in Sky City, I almost can't believe this guy dares to sell a fasting aid pill. He's either a con artist or a psycho."

"Hmph. Fasting aid pills don't do any good here!"

More and more people gathered and began to discuss the matter, but no one was willing to buy a pill. That was even more so considering that Bai Xiaochun's quoted price was 100 merit points.

Bai Xiaochun soon got nervous, and was even starting to consider dropping the price. However, that was when a certain cultivator appeared in the crowd. He was currently gaunt, but considering his height, he had obviously once been very muscular. Furthermore, he had a cold gleam in his eyes, and a murderous aura that anyone could detect.

He wasn't alone, either. Walking along next to him was a young boy with a waxen face and listless eyes.

As soon as the big man appeared, the gathered crowd went silent,

and many of them even backed up a bit. Apparently, they recognized him, and didn't dare to do anything to offend him.

“Ultra Fasting Aid Pill? 100 merit points, huh...?” The big man's eyes narrowed as he looked at one of the pill bottles, then back at Bai Xiaochun. Because of the way that everyone in the city suppressed their cultivation bases, it was impossible for the man to determine Bai Xiaochun's cultivation level. However, based on his judgement, he placed him at Foundation Establishment or higher. Eyes glittering coldly, he said, “If this thing really works, then it would definitely be worth 100 merit points. But... if it doesn't, then you'll either pay me back tenfold, or I'll teach you a lesson you won't forget for a long time!” Before Bai Xiaochun could even react, he reached out, grabbed one of the pill bottles and crushed it, then tossed the medicinal pill to his child.

The boy morosely opened his mouth and swallowed the pill.

Of course, everyone was watching closely to see what would happen. As for Bai Xiaochun, his expression was the same as ever, but inside, his nervousness was mounting, although it wasn't because of the big man. From what he could tell, the man was only in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, and Bai Xiaochun knew that he could stomp the man in a fight even if he were hungrier than he already was.

What had him nervous was his uncertainty about how effective the pill would be....

As everyone looked on, the boy's expression suddenly flickered. His eyes opened, and he began to shake visibly, causing the audience to crane their necks to see what would happen next.

Gradually, the onlookers' eyes began to widen, and then cries of disbelief and shock began to ring out.

“W-what's... what's going on!?!?”

“Heavens! I can't believe this Ultra Fasting Aid Pill actually

works!!”

“How is this possible?!?!”

As such exclamations continued to fill the air, the young boy’s gaunt frame suddenly began to fill in with flesh. Within only a few breaths of time, he was the picture of a healthy boy. He was even a bit chubby!

Gasps and cries of astonishment could be heard in all directions. As for the big man who had bought the pill, he was shaking, and his eyes began to shine with shock.

“Immortal medicine! That’s immortal medicine!!” The man quickly reached out to grab the remaining two bottles, but before he could, Bai Xiaochun leveled a cold gaze at him.

The man’s mind filled with rumbling sounds, and his hand lurched to a halt. As of this moment, a sensation of deadly crisis had filled him, and something inside of him was telling him that if he dared to try to steal the pill bottles, he would be struck dead instantly!

“I painstakingly concocted these pills with undying wheatgrass,” Bai Xiaochun said coolly. “It’s very expensive. I only offered it up for 100 merit points because I knew that nobody would be interested or even trust that they were real. As of this moment, these pills cost 300 merit points each!”

The big man took a deep breath and said, “Fine, 900 merit points for the first pill plus these two!”

Without any hesitation, he pulled out a jade slip and transferred 900 merit points to Bai Xiaochun. Then he grabbed the pills and hurried off.

Although everyone else in the crowd wished they could have bought the pills, nobody was able to do anything. That was when Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and produced three more bottles from his bag of holding....

In the time it takes an incense stick to burn, he sold thirty Ultra Fasting Aid Pills. Only after all of the pills had been snatched up did he put away his vendor's stand, and then stroll off proudly, hands clasped behind his back.

“Hmmmmmph. Master God-Diviner schemed his way out of the group, but little did he know that Bai Xiaochun could casually come up with 9,000 merit points with almost no effort!” The sight of so many merit points in his identity medallion filled his heart with complete satisfaction.

“Right now, I'm a red-robed disciple, which means I have to spend 100,000 merit points to become an orange-robed disciple. However, to leave Sky City and fly up to the rainbow district, I need to become a yellow-robed disciple, which costs 1,000,000 merit points.

“That's not very much....” Feeling very proud of himself, he rubbed his belly and then hurried to a nearby spirit food restaurant. After buying enough food for five people, he began to stuff himself, simultaneously contemplating how wonderful life was. Filled to bursting, he returned to his spirit abode and began to concoct more medicine.

Chapter 383: Attracting Attention

As the night wore on, Bai Xiaochun became obsessed with pill concocting in a way that was completely different from before. By the time the sun rose, he had concocted 50 Ultra Fasting Aid Pills, whereupon he hurried out of his spirit abode toward the public square.

This time, he had barely set up his vendor stall and put the medicinal pill bottles out before a whole crowd of cultivators had gathered, pushing and shoving in their madness to buy some of the pills.

It didn't take long before all 50 of the Ultra Fasting Aid Pills were gone. Bai Xiaochun was completely taken aback. However, after a bit of thought, he realized why the pills sold so quickly.

Compared to the outrageously expensive spirit food in the city, the pills were very cheap. Furthermore, they were so effective that no one could possibly be unmoved by them. After some consideration, though, Bai Xiaochun decided not to raise his prices. As far as he was concerned, the inhabitants of the city had things rough as it was, and besides, he was already making a great profit.

However, the next day as he was passing by a random shop, he noticed to his astonishment that they had an Ultra Fasting Aid Pill for sale for 3,000 merit points!

Upon arriving at the public square, he couldn't even sit down before eight cultivators rushed over and began fighting over the chance to be first in line. And furthermore, all of them wanted to buy his entire supply of pills.

By now, Bai Xiaochun was on guard, and after a bit of observation, came to the realization that these cultivators were all employees of various shops in the east district. Obviously, they wanted to purchase the pills at a low price and then resell them for

a profit.

Bai Xiaochun was not very pleased at all, and immediately established a new rule governing sales. Each customer could only purchase one pill at the normal price. The second pill would be twice as expensive. The same went for the third pill. However, this new rule wasn't very effective. After all, the cultivators in Sky City were most unscrupulous....

Bai Xiaochun simply ignored that, though, and continued selling pills for seven days. By that point, he had accumulated close to 100,000 merit points.

Meanwhile, the matter of the Ultra Fasting Aid Pills in the east district had caused quite a commotion. Many people had heard of them, including certain powerful organizations in the city.

There were countless such organizations in Sky City, which were essentially gangs of cultivators. The largest and most powerful of them was the Celestial Sky Society, which controlled nearly eighty percent of the shops. With that monopoly, and the fact that they were backed by a deva clan, no one ever dared to provoke them.

When it came to the east district, there was no single person from the Celestial Sky Society who ran it, but rather, there were three of them, all of them famous orange-robed disciples. Currently, they were meeting in a secret location, serious expressions on their faces as they studied... an Ultra Fasting Aid Pill!

They took turns holding it in their hands and looking at it from all angles. None of them spoke, and a bit of time passed before someone called out greetings from outside of the secret chamber.

Standing outside was an old man with a full head of white hair. He was surrounded by a strong medicinal aroma, and as soon as he entered, the three orange-robed cultivators rose to their feet and greeting him respectfully.

The old man didn't waste any words. Pointing at the Ultra

Fasting Aid Pill, he said, “This pill contains 123 different types of medicinal effects. The combination of so many types of effects can lead to infinite variations.... I’ve never seen anything like it in my life.

“In terms of ingredients, it contains nineteen different varieties of medicinal plant, which, when merged together, give rise to those 123 different medicinal effects. If my speculations are correct, a unique concoction method was used to produce the pill!

“Whoever concocted it might not have overall skill in the Dao of medicine to rival my own, but when it comes to the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression, he definitely is my superior!” This old man had spent several days researching the pill, and had been left completely shaken by what he saw.

One of the three orange-robed disciples couldn’t help but ask, “Is there any way you can reproduce the formula and technique so that we can concoct it ourselves?”

“Apparently you didn’t understand what I just said. Let me put it this way: not only have I never heard of an Ultra Fasting Aid Pill before, even after researching it, I can assure you that the formula is not like anything I’ve ever seen before. There are some flaws to it, but consuming it won’t cause any significant harm. At worst, it might cause some temporary damage to one’s vital energy. However, any such damage will quickly be repaired. Furthermore, after consuming the pill, a cultivator will be able to stave off the draining of their energy for about half a month. In the final analysis, I’m convinced... that someone recently invented this pill formula!

“Do you really think that I can simply analyze and reproduce such a powerful, recently invented pill formula? I don’t have that level of skill!”

Eyes shining brightly, the old man continued, “However, what I can do is take an existing pill and possibly split it up into more

than one pill. Unfortunately... that would reduce the quality and make the side-effects worse.”

The three orange-robed disciples didn't respond. All of them knew that if these pills continued to be concocted and sold to the inhabitants of Sky City, it would have a seriously detrimental effect on the sale of spirit food. In fact, it could even end the industry altogether.

Obviously, the Celestial Sky Society had no desire for the status quo to change.

If only they could acquire the pill formula, then they would be able to get a handle on the situation, and perhaps even prevent the pill from being concocted!

The three orange-robed disciples exchanged glances, and then two of them turned to the third.

“Killing people violates the rules set forth by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect,” said one of the two, “so we should avoid that if possible. Even the main headquarters agrees with that.” Both of the men clasped hands respectfully. “Therefore, Fellow Daoist Zhou, would it be possible for you to get in contact with the cultivator selling this pill, and somehow acquire the pill formula? If not, well... hmph, I guess we could use the cooperation method!”

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun had been enjoying life for the past seven days. He was both pleased and shocked at his rapidly growing accumulation of merit points, and had been constantly splurging on the most expensive spirit foods. He had even gone to the Magic Pavilion to buy a large collection of magical items and defensive treasures.

What excited him most was that in Sky City, there were certain shops that sold beast mounts. The most expensive could cost millions of merit points, and even the cheapest went for more than 100,000.

Bai Xiaochun immediately fell in love with the idea of having a beast mount. After all, the cultivators he had seen in the city who went around on such mounts were all extraordinary figures. His desire itched in his heart, but unfortunately, he was worried that he couldn't actually afford one. Therefore, he waited a few days until he couldn't hold back anymore, and then spent over 100,000 merit points on a battle mount.

To most cultivators in the city, a mount like this would be considered a luxury. It was fully 90 meters long, and looked like a fearsome crocodile. It had three eyes, was covered with armor-like scales, and had a cultivation base comparable to the early Foundation Establishment stage.

When Bai Xiaochun sat on the back of the crocodile, he felt extremely grand and imposing. Its growling cry echoed like thunder, and ensured that he was the subject of much envy as he rode it back to his spirit abode.

"In a few days, I'll pick a new place to stay," he thought. "This spirit abode doesn't fit me anymore. I need an immortal's cave! And the best one at that!" Even as his eyes sparkled with pride, he realized that there was an orange-robed cultivator waiting for him outside of his spirit abode, hands clasped behind his back.

He was flanked by seven or eight red-robed disciples, all of whom seemed energetic and ready to fight. In fact, they weren't suppressing their cultivation bases, which ensured that a weighty pressure filled the entire area surrounding the spirit abode.

However, even the orange-robed disciple was only in the great circle of Foundation Establishment. As for the other Foundation Establishment cultivators, Bai Xiaochun could tell that they wouldn't pose a threat to him at all, so he ignored them.

They looked at him, and he looked back at them. As for the orange-robed disciple, as soon as he got a look at Bai Xiaochun's face, his expression turned very serious.

Everyone in the city usually suppressed their cultivation bases to the limit. However, as for this orange-robed disciple, with careful scrutiny, he could determine if a person was weaker than him or not. The only people he would be unable to assess would be people who were already in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, or higher.

Currently, he couldn't assess Bai Xiaochun at all....

However, it didn't occur to him that Bai Xiaochun might be in Core Formation.... That was because, despite how packed Sky City was, there were actually very few Core Formation cultivators there.

After all... with a Gold Core cultivation base, it would be a relatively simple thing to go on missions and earn the merit points necessary to be promoted to the rainbow district.

“Well this might be a problem....” the orange-robed cultivator thought, frowning. Despite having run a background check on Bai Xiaochun, he hadn't found any information about him other than his surname. After a moment, he decided that, considering the level of cultivation base he was dealing with, he shouldn't beat around the bush. The Ultra Fasting Aid Pill was too important, and therefore, the best choice in the situation was to start out by trying to cooperate with its maker. His frown turned into a smile.

As Bai Xiaochun neared, the orange-robed disciple clasped hands and bowed.

“Brother Bai, I presume? I am your humble servant Zhou Tao, a leader of sorts within the Celestial Sky Society. I was hoping to discuss the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill with you. If we cooperate, I think we can make a handsome profit!”

Chapter 384: Schemes and Tricks

“What do you mean work together?” Bai Xiaochun said, looking down at Zhou Tao from his position atop the crocodile.

Zhou Tao was not very pleased that Bai Xiaochun hadn't dismounted from the crocodile, but his tone of voice didn't reveal that as he said, “Your humble servant wishes to purchase the precious pill formula for the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill. Would you be willing to part with it for 100,000 merit points, Brother Bai?”

“It's not for sale,” Bai Xiaochun said, rolling his eyes. With that, he flew off of the crocodile, then swished his sleeve, causing it to fly into his spirit beast bag. Just as he was about to step into his spirit abode, Zhou Tao moved to block his way.

“Brother Bai, if you don't want to sell the formula, that's fine. But would you be willing to let the Celestial Sky Society be the exclusive dealer for your pill?”

“Exclusive dealer?” Bai Xiaochun looked at Zhou Tao for a moment. The truth was that going out to sell the pills on his own over the past few days had been a bit troublesome. If this Zhou Tao could do that for him, it would definitely save some effort.

“The Celestial Sky Society virtually runs Sky City,” Zhou Tao said with a smile. “Therefore, I am very confident that within a few short months, we could get your Ultra Fasting Aid Pill to every corner of the city. By that point, you would be able to make a huge profit without having to do any of the grunt work yourself.”

Bai Xiaochun thought about it for a moment, and then began to discuss the particulars with Zhou Tao. Two hours passed, and they finally agreed that the Celestial Sky Society would buy the pills for 300 merit points, resell them at a higher price, and then split any subsequent profits 50/50. Bai Xiaochun almost felt like he was taking advantage of them, but Zhou Tao seemed quite pleased. Smiling, they swore a Dao oath and recorded it on a jade slip,

which they then sent to the Justice Bureau of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to make the deal official.

Before leaving, Zhou Tao smiled and asked, “Brother Bai, might I know your illustrious given name? Since we’re partners now, I’d like to know a bit more about you.”

Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up, waved his sleeve and loftily said, “You can just call me Apothecary Bai.”

After a brief moment of hesitation, Zhou Tao smiled again and then took his leave.

In the following days, Bai Xiaochun went crazy concocting medicine. Furthermore, he increased his daily quota from 50 pills to 100.

That was his limit. Every time Zhou Tao came to collect the pills, he would simply hand over 30,000 merit points. As for the extra money from the profits, that would come later, after all sales were finalized.

Another seven days went by in a flash. During that time, the Celestial Sky Society’s hard work ensured that the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill created a huge stir in the east district. The entire place was thrown into an uproar, and the cultivators there were going crazy. Although the prices were quite high, many cultivators bought them, and soon, the spirit food market began to drop.

Before long, virtually all of the cultivators in the east district were talking about Ultra Fasting Aid Pills. Furthermore, the Celestial Sky Society made a point of crediting Apothecary Bai. As a result, virtually everyone in east district knew that the Ultra Fasting Aid Pills were concocted by Apothecary Bai, with the Celestial Sky Society cultivators being nothing more than dealers representing him.

Bai Xiaochun found something odd about that, but didn’t do anything to stop them from spreading his name. Eventually, Zhou

Tao came to share the merit point profits, which was a sum of tens of thousands. When he said that such profits would only continue to increase, Bai Xiaochun got more excited than ever.

Of course, what Bai Xiaochun didn't know was that after the Celestial Sky Society got the Ultra Fasting Aid Pills, their apothecary spared absolutely no cost or effort to turn the 100 pills into 3,000. Because of that, the negative side effects grew even more extreme!

Over the course of the past week, Bai Xiaochun had given them 700 pills, but they had turned that into over 20,000 pills to sell. Furthermore, they didn't just sell them in the east district, they also sent them to the west, south, and north districts. As for Bai Xiaochun, there was no way for him to catch wind of that in the short time which had passed.

For the first time, Bai Xiaochun had more than 200,000 merit points saved up. Excited, he finally decided to spend 100,000 of them to become an orange-robed disciple.

The new clothing was very comfortable, and as he went around on his battle beast, he felt extremely grand. With his Ultra Fasting Aid Pill, he could easily dominate everything under heaven. However, even as he proceeded along down the street looking down upon all creation with haughtiness, he suddenly heard someone scream. Shocked, he stood up on his battle beast and craned his neck to see a cultivator off in the distance, writhing on the ground as his flesh rapidly withered up.

Before he could even react, more people in the crowd suddenly fell to the ground, screaming as their bodies began to wither. Bai Xiaochun instantly started to get nervous.

“What's going on? Is the city under attack!?” He immediately sent his battle beast rushing back toward his spirit abode. Along the way, he was astonished to discover that dozens of people were falling to the ground and withering up. In fact, he even noticed

that one of them was a cultivator who had bought his pill in the past. More than ever, he now felt that something strange was going on.

Unfortunately, things were only getting started. The next day, even more people in the east district were suddenly struck with incredible, explosive levels of hunger. More than a hundred people were affected, and already, the news was spreading like wildfire.

Although no one had died yet, all of them ended up with damaged vital energy. Some could recover after a bit of rest, but for others, the injuries were more serious.

Of course, the wrath of the cultivators was aroused, and as people began to look into the situation, it quickly became apparent that everyone who had been struck with sudden hunger and gauntness, without a single exception, had consumed an Ultra Fasting Aid Pill.

In terms of how serious the injuries to vital energy were, nobody paid much attention. As far as everyone was concerned, that didn't matter. Furthermore, thanks to the whisperings of certain individuals, people quickly began to lay the blame on Bai Xiaochun.

“These Ultra Fasting Aid Pills are fake!”

“Apothecary Bai is a swindler!!”

“Dammit! Things are already bad enough here, I can't believe someone would stoop to conning us! If there weren't strict rules here, I'd personally go and kill Apothecary Bai!!”

More and more people began to fall to the symptoms. As for the friends and family of the victims, as well as the other cultivators who weren't affected, they all began to simmer with rage. Of course, there were people egging them on secretly, attempting to sway public opinion and stoke the fury which was building in the east district.

The anger quickly began to transform into killing intent, and

despite Bai Xiaochun being a Gold Core cultivator, this wasn't the River-Defying Sect. This was the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, a place where he was a stranger. Furthermore, he had nobody to protect him, and as such, the rising anger being directed toward him filled him with a sensation of deadly crisis!

It soon reached the point where he was nearly scared out of his mind. Thankfully, he had experienced similar situations in the Spirit Stream Sect and the Blood Stream Sect, so before anything could actually happen, he packed his bags and fled into the night.

Now that he was descending from the high of suddenly having so many merit points, it occurred to him that he had been well played by the Celestial Sky Society.

"Damn you, Celestial Sky Society!! I didn't do anything to offend you people!" Gritting his teeth, he sped along under the cover of darkness, feeling very sorry for himself, and at the same time, extremely irritated.

To have been schemed against and then toyed with in such a matter was a huge loss of face, and the anger in his eyes soon began to burn brightly. Of course, he couldn't bring himself to just flee without getting to the bottom of the situation. Not daring to go confront anyone from the Celestial Sky Society, he found some of the people who had been struck by side effects, and did a bit of research of his own. Soon, he understood the truth.

"The Ultra Fasting Aid Pills these people consumed were altered. They weren't the pills I gave to the Celestial Sky Society! My pills might have some impurities, but the side effects should have been limited to minor damage to vital energy. Nothing that a bit of rest couldn't fix! Something that minor would be worth it in exchange for half a month without being hungry and having your energy drained!

"But the Celestial Sky Society changed my spirit medicine and made it far more harmful. They even reduced the effectiveness!!

“Why would they do something like that!?” Gritting his teeth, he drew upon the power of his cultivation base to flee the east district and go to the north district. However, after arriving, it was to his shock that he found that there were also people there who had been harmed by consuming Ultra Fasting Aid Pills. By this point, a thought struck him like lightning.

“I get it. The Celestial Sky Society is the most powerful organization in Sky City, and they control most of the shops and stores. The biggest profits in the city come from spirit food, and the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill struck a huge blow to the spirit food industry!

“They came to me, not to work together to sell pills, but to completely destroy the reputation of my Ultra Fasting Aid Pill!!” The more he came to understand what had occurred, the angrier he got.

“Well isn’t this interesting. They didn’t use magic or try to assassinate me, they schemed their way to victory! Well, Bai Xiaochun can play that game too! You just wait, Celestial Sky Society. You just wait!!” Gritting his teeth, he settled down in the north district.

Chapter 385: Running Into Master God-Diviner

After arriving in the north district, Bai Xiaochun rented another spirit abode. He also spent some merit points to get some food, and then sat down and focused on cultivation for a few days until the commotion in the city died down.

Now that he was at the very source of the Heavenspan River, he could continuously work on his Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, as long as he had enough food to make up for the energy drainage.

The energy of heaven and earth in the area was majestic beyond description, and ensured that his cultivation was advancing by leaps and bounds. Although he hadn't quite broken past the Frigid Acolyte level, he was definitely far beyond his previous point.

By now, he could emit shocking pulses of frigid qi out of his palm to form something like a projection of a person. That projection was one of the key signs of the Frigid Acolyte level, a frigid shadow.

He also persisted in the cultivation of his Undying Muscles, making sure to spend time working on it every day. By now, he had completely finished his work on his second toe, and had moved on to his third toe.

“The patriarchs were right,” he thought with a sigh. “My cultivation is moving a lot faster here in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.”

Time marched on.

Three months later, the waves caused by the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill incident had mostly died down. Virtually everyone in Sky City had heard that the whole thing was a scam, and as such, were very leery of any type of fasting aids.

Because of that, it was impossible to sell Ultra Fasting Aid Pills, and even if someone created a new type, no one would trust that it was real, and even fewer people would dare to consume one.

The Celestial Sky Society had achieved their goal with minimal effort. In fact, they had even made a bit of profit in the process. Not only had the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill been done away with once and for all, all of the blame had been placed onto the head of the now-missing Apothecary Bai.

Of course, the Celestial Sky Society also apologized to everyone who had been injured because of the pills, and used various means to provide compensation. In the end, there were almost no negative ramifications for them.

The only thing they regretted was that they hadn't managed to incite the populace to rise up and put Bai Xiaochun to death. However, as far as they were concerned, he was nothing more than a talented apothecary, not someone worth worrying about.

It was a war that had been fought without unleashing a single magical technique, and Bai Xiaochun... had been thoroughly defeated!

That fact left Bai Xiaochun profoundly irritated. Had he lost in magical combat, he wouldn't have cared. But to have been defeated this way left him filled with fury, almost to the point of madness. Never before had he been humiliated in such a fashion, and he had even considering relying on the power of his cultivation base to go stomp the Celestial Sky Society. But then he realized that considering how large of an organization they were, even with his Gold Core cultivation base... they probably wouldn't be that easy to deal with.

“Relying on one's cultivation base isn't a true display of skill,” he said to himself through gritted teeth. “Wherever Bai Xiaochun falls down, that's where he rises back up! I can scheme too, can't I!?” With that, he took a sip of Hundred Flowers spirit alcohol, and

then ate a mouthful of Precious Jade spirit rice. Those two particular brands of spirit food were relatively expensive, and had been his favorite back in the east district. Thankfully, after arriving at the north district, he still had some left over that he'd bought earlier.

Unfortunately, over the past three months, he had been forced to watch as his food supply dwindled and the merit points in his identity medallion were slowly eaten away. He hardly had any left now.

"I guess I was just living too extravagantly before...." he thought. He was even starting to regret having spent those 100,000 merit points to become an orange-robed disciple, and also realized that it had been a bit impulsive to buy his crocodile mount.

"What am I supposed to do?" he thought, scowling on the verge of tears. "I can't sell Ultra Fasting Aid Pills anymore. Don't tell me that I'm going to have to go back to living frugally and survive by consuming my own Ultra Fasting Aid Pills...?" With that, he ate another mouthful of spirit rice, his anger toward the Celestial Sky Society continuing to grow.

Half a month later, he was on the verge of completely running out of spirit food, and he had almost no merit points left. Sadly, he had yet to come up with an idea of how to earn more merit points. Finally, when he was sure that the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill commotion had died down, he sighed, took a bath in spirit water, and then worked up a quick disguise so that people wouldn't recognize his face. Then he left his spirit abode.

"I guess I have no choice but to sell my crocodile mount, plus all of those magical items I bought. Probably that jewelry too." Although he was loathe to do such a thing, he didn't really have any other choice. After jumping onto his crocodile's back, he thought about how grand he must look with his orange robe. Unfortunately, his bag of holding was virtually completely empty....

Thankfully, crocodiles were one of the most common types of mounts in Sky City, so nobody connected the current Bai Xiaochun to the Apothecary Bai of the east district.

As he proceeded along through the north district, quite a few people looked at him with envy and respect. There were even some orange-robed disciples who looked at him that way. After all, only people with lots of money or power could afford battle beast mounts. That, coupled with the glitter of the magical treasures with which he festooned himself, all made him look very impressive.

However, such gazes only made Bai Xiaochun feel worse.

“After today,” he thought dejectedly, “nobody is going to look at me like that anymore.” Sighing, he decided to parade around the city for a bit longer.

It was with great wistfulness that he toured the north district all the way until evening was about to fall. At that point, he gritted his teeth and decided to head to the Spirit Beast Pavilion. Along the way, he passed a certain alley where he happened to notice a familiar cultivator standing there.

He was holding a banner in his hand upon which were written three characters.

Master God-Diviner....

He was clearly much thinner than he had been when he had parted ways with Bai Xiaochun. His face was waxen and sunken in, his eyes listless. He seemed to be in very bad shape.

Few people paid any attention to him as they walked past, and even when he called out to try to drum up business, people simply ignored him. Considering the bleak expression on his face, and his blank stare, it almost looked like his soul had left him.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked at his appearance, and immediately felt bad for him. Patting his crocodile mount, he headed over in

Master God-Diviner's direction.

Even before he got near, the crocodile's enormous frame cast a huge shadow over Master God-Diviner, who shivered and looked up. The sight that met his eyes was a ferocious 90-meter-long crocodile looming over him.

It had armor-like scales that glittered in the evening light, and the breath that escaped its nostrils as it breathed was enough to leave one's mind spinning. Atop the crocodile was Bai Xiaochun, clad in the garments of an orange-robed disciple, looking very grand, surrounded as he was by the glittering light of magical treasures.

Master God-Diviner was instantly shaken, and his eyes began to shine with unprecedentedly bright light. His experiences during the past few months had left him with a keen understanding regarding people like this. They were like Chosen in Sky City, people with tens of thousands of merit points at their disposal, many of whom were very close to becoming yellow-robed disciples.

They were the truly powerful figures in the city, people whom Master God-Diviner had come to envy and look up to during the past months. As of this moment, his excitement was building at the prospect of getting a client like this. Eyes sparkling, he straightened out his robe and then clasped hands and bowed.

"Brother, please wait a moment! I am your humble servant Master God-Diviner, and if possible, would like to speak a word with you!"

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then remembered that he was in disguise. Therefore, he pretended to think about the matter for a moment before finally voicing his assent.

Master God-Diviner was so excited that he was trembling. The truth was that he hadn't even prepared any words to say in a situation like this. The mere fact that someone had agreed to listen to him left his eyes brimming with tears of excitement. Mustering

his courage, he told himself, “Master God-Diviner, ahhh, Master God-Diviner. You definitely have to please this fellow. Look at how impressive he is! If you make him happy, the merit points will surely come flowing in. Furthermore, you might even be able to convince him to take you on as a permanent diviner!!”

With that, he put a serious expression on his face and then performed a double-handed incantation gesture, then peered at Bai Xiaochun as if to look into his future. Soon, powerful fluctuations began to roll off of him, making him look quite imposing.

However, a moment later, his eyes widened, and he began to tremble.

“No. No, it can’t be. This can’t be right. Why are my divinations showing me him? Hold on, let me start over....” By this point he was breathing heavily, and a look of complete incredulity could be seen on his face. He quickly performed another double-handed incantation gesture, after which his eyes grew even wider. He almost looked like he had seen a ghost.

“You’re... you’re....”

A strange expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun’s face as he looked down at Master God-Diviner from his position on the crocodile. Obviously, Master God-Diviner had deduced his true identity, which was no surprise considering that he did have some skill with divination.

After all, he had divined information about Bai Xiaochun back in the Blood Stream Sect days, and had always been fairly accurate....

“How did you get yourself in such a bad situation, Master Snortsnort?” Bai Xiaochun said. “I mean, I thought I had it bad, but obviously, you have it way worse than me.”

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Master God-Diviner felt like he had just been struck by lightning. Trembling, he staggered backward. When he had performed the divination just now, what he had seen had been

almost impossible to believe. Now that he recognized Bai Xiaochun's voice, he was left reeling in shock.

Bai Xiaochun felt quite pleased to see Master God-Diviner reacting in such a way. However, he cleared his throat and said, "Keep your voice down...."

Chapter 386: Why Aren't You Kowtowing!?

“You.... I....” Master God-Diviner stared at Bai Xiaochun, his mind reeling, almost unable to believe how events were unfolding. However, he could believe it, no matter how much he didn't want to.

He was currently teetering on the verge of passing out, and all he could think about were the grand aspirations he had harbored upon leaving Bai Xiaochun's spirit abode all those months ago, and also Bai Xiaochun's voice calling out to him as he left.

Back then, he had been absolutely certain that he had made the right decision. Now, though, it felt like the world was playing a cruel joke on him....

That was especially the case when Bai Xiaochun said, “you have it way worse than me.” That caused tears to instantly well up in Master God-Diviner's eyes.

There Bai Xiaochun was, glittering with the light of magical treasures, his face glowing with a healthy sheen, riding a huge crocodile. He didn't seem to have things bad at all, and it caused Master God-Diviner's heart to fill with an intense sensation of injustice.

The past few months had been very difficult. Few people believed the divinations he performed, and he had even gotten into some disputes with customers. At first, he hadn't worried about that, but as more and more people got angry with him, he had been forced to flee in terror from the east district. Eventually, he ended up in the north district, where he managed to get back on his feet to some extent. Unfortunately, his income was scanty, and he ended every day feeling hungry. Even worse, he had to pay a merit point protection fee to one of the local gangs to be allowed to have a spot to perform divinations.

As he thought about all these things, Master God-Diviner smiled

bitterly. Realizing that he had to accept reality, he sighed and said, “You really think you have it bad? I think you’ve actually gained some weight since I saw you last.”

Bai Xiaochun hopped off of the crocodile, which he then sucked into his spirit beast bag. As he stood there with his orange robe and glittering magical treasures, Master God-Diviner couldn’t help but gasp inwardly. He well knew that to become an orange-robed disciple, one had to pay 100,000 merit points. Plus, a crocodile mount like the one Bai Xiaochun had would cost about the same. After all, Master God-Diviner had even enviously passed through the Spirit Beast Pavilion before.

“Oh, I have it bad alright,” Bai Xiaochun said sadly, “let me tell you. Ai. It’s been two meals now since I’ve had any Precious Jade spirit rice, and a whole day since I ran out of Hundred Flowers spirit alcohol. Plus, I haven’t bathed in spirit water for nearly half a day. Look, I even smell a bit sweaty! I can’t believe I’ve gotten so poor!” Everything he had just said was true. After all, his life in the east district had been one of luxury and excess. Now that he was in the north district, everything was different, and he couldn’t help but feel irritated about that.

Master God-Diviner’s eyes glazed over. The mere words ‘Precious Jade spirit rice’ left his heart trembling. Spirit rice like that was something he had only heard about, and had never even been able to smell, let alone taste. It was incredibly expensive, and it had once been his dream to try some. And yet here Bai Xiaochun was saying that he had gone two meals without eating any....

And then there was ‘Hundred Flowers spirit alcohol.’ That sent Master God-Diviner even further in the direction of madness. That was the most expensive types of alcohol available in the city, and among his current circle of friends, being able to even drink a mouthful would have made him the subject of envy and jealousy. And yet here Bai Xiaochun was saying that he hadn’t had any for a day! That implied that he normally drank it on a daily basis....

And when bathing in spirit water was mentioned, tears began to stream down Master God-Diviner's face. A mere glance at Bai Xiaochun's skin confirmed that it was glossy and imbued with spiritual energy. That wasn't from his cultivation base; it was caused by the special properties of the spirit water in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Such water left the body with a layer of natural protection that was mysterious and profound, to say the least.

However, such protection was definitely a luxury; if one went for five days or more without bathing in spirit water, it would naturally fade away.

Master God-Diviner stared at Bai Xiaochun, eyes glistening miserably. "Junior Patriarch...."

"Ah, whatever," Bai Xiaochun said, waving his hand in grandly dismissive fashion. "I brought you here with me, didn't I? Therefore, I'm responsible for you. You might have mercilessly dumped me early on, but I'm a magnanimous person. From now on, you stick with me, alright?" Master God-Diviner immediately began to tremble. The truth was that he would have stuck with Bai Xiaochun even if Bai Xiaochun tried to drive him away. He had already resolved to swear an oath to follow Bai Xiaochun even if it meant following him into death!

"Many thanks, Junior Patriarch!!" From the excited way he put his banner and table away, it was clear that he felt no attachment to his vendor spot. Hurrying to follow Bai Xiaochun, he said, "So, Junior Patriarch, where are we going?"

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, but then decided to simply tell the truth. "Let's go to the Spirit Beas—"

However, before he could finish speaking, three beams of light sped toward them. Apparently, these three people had noticed Master God-Diviner getting ready to leave, and were now attempting to intercept him.

Three cultivators landed in front of Master God-Diviner, one of them a middle-aged man with a cultivation base in the great circle of Foundation Establishment. “Leaving early because you got a new customer, Master God-Diviner?” he said. “Very well, at least pay your daily fee before leaving!”

The man’s eyes flashed like lightning, and although he wasn’t exactly fat, neither was he skinny, and he wore an orange robe just like Bai Xiaochun’s. Obviously, he lived a fairly comfortable life here in Sky City.

Glancing at Bai Xiaochun, he looked back at Master God-Diviner, a false smile stretching out across his face.

Master God-Diviner’s face fell. These three were by no means strangers to him; they came from the group that controlled this area. They and a few dozen other cultivators that made up the gang forced all of the vendor stalls in the area to pay a protection fee for the right to do business.

Master God-Diviner was clearly embarrassed, and didn’t want Bai Xiaochun to see him in such a situation. Lowering his voice, he said, “I didn’t do any business today. How about tomorrow I–”

One of the red-robed disciples among the three interrupted Master God-Diviner and said, “We don’t care if you did business or not. The fee is 10 merit points a day! That’s what we agreed to, so pay up!”

Master God-Diviner’s expression flickered with distress. He knew that Bai Xiaochun, with his Gold Core cultivation base, wouldn’t even bother to spare these three a glance. But Master God-Diviner still didn’t want to lose face in front of Bai Xiaochun. After all, he had been the one to part ways, and if he needed Bai Xiaochun’s help in this situation, it would be far too embarrassing.

Gritting his teeth, forced a smile onto his face and prepared to pull out his identity medallion.

But then, the man in the orange robe said, “Now that you have such a high-class customer, Master God-Diviner, I’m afraid the 10 merit point fee won’t be enough. We need you to pay for next month in advance!”

Rage immediately began to flicker in Master God-Diviner’s eyes. “You people–”

“Now now, hold that temper of yours! If you don’t have enough, I’m sure this new customer of yours wouldn’t mind giving you an advance on your services.” The orange-robed cultivator looked at Bai Xiaochun with a false smile, his eyes lingering on his numerous glowing magical treasures. Despite his greed, though, he didn’t dare to push things too far. He could tell that Bai Xiaochun most likely had an impressive background. However, trying to get a few hundred merit points out of him wouldn’t be too excessive.

“Junior Patriarch....” Master God-Diviner said hesitantly. However, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand to cut him off. Eyes shining brightly, he looked over at the orange-robed cultivator.

“Well, isn’t this interesting. I can’t believe I never thought of this myself.” The look in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes left the orange-robed disciple feeling very unsettled, and the two red-robed disciples suddenly had very serious expressions on their faces.

“You dare to try to take my money with a Foundation Establishment cultivation base?” Bai Xiaochun said. “I’m afraid things don’t work like that.” With that, he threw his head back and began to laugh loudly. The three cultivators instantly realized something was wrong, and were just getting ready to attack Bai Xiaochun when he suddenly waved his hand, causing a gale-force wind to spring up.

Rumblings sounds filled the air, and blood sprayed out of the mouths of the three cultivators as they were sent tumbling backward thirty meters.

“Core Formation!!”

Before the three of them could stop hurtling through the air, Bai Xiaochun made a grasping motion, turning the wind into bonds that wrapped around them and pulled them toward him.

“I have the feeling you people are in need of a good leader. What do you think? Join me, and we can rule everything under heaven!” Bai Xiaochun was being very sincere, and in his mind, the grandiose words he had just spoken should definitely cause the three men to drop to their knees and kowtow.

The three of them were trembling, and appeared to be on the verge of weeping.

Even Master God-Diviner was a bit taken aback.

“Don’t worry. With me around, nothing bad will happen to you. Come, come. Lead the way to your headquarters so I can meet all the other Fellow Daoists in your group.” As of this point, he had completely abandoned his plan to sell his crocodile mount. These three cultivators had unwittingly opened a door that Bai Xiaochun had never imagined even existed....

All of a sudden, he could almost see all the merit points that were waiting for him....

Chapter 387: Fantasy Pills

In Sky City, the east district had the reputation of being luxurious and extravagant. The north district was more out-of-the-way, and not as well off. Most of the cultivators there were just ordinary people without impressive backgrounds.

The Azure Dragon Society had started out relatively unknown in the north district. Considering the impressive name they had picked for their organization, one could well imagine the heroic aspirations of its founders.

But ideals don't always measure up to reality. In the hundred years since its founding, they had never grown beyond the small sphere of influence they had started out with on the very edge of the north district.

Luckily, the headquarters of the Azure Dragon Society happened to be an immortal's cave, and not a spirit abode. It even had a courtyard with a fountain. Unfortunately, the courtyard was overrun with weeds, and the fountain had long since dried up, but the place was good enough for a small organization like the Azure Dragon Society.

The Azure Dragon Society only had about thirty members, and made their living from protection fees and selling spirit medicines that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect neither prohibited nor endorsed. Although they couldn't count as being rich, they at least had it better off than average cultivators.

Over their hundred-year-history, eight of their number had already become yellow-robed disciples. The most successful of all was one of the original founders, who was now in the early Gold Core stage and lived in the rainbow district. For old times' sake, and to keep the organization going, he occasionally came back to offer some support and assistance. However, it wasn't a simple thing to return to Sky City, so such visits were somewhat of a

rarity.

Therefore, the moment Bai Xiaochun walked through the door of the Azure Dragon Society with his Gold Core cultivation base, he was their new leader.

After Bai Xiaochun and Master God-Diviner entered the immortal's cave, booms and bangs began to ring out. Then everything went silent. Moments later, people began to call out greetings.

“Greetings, Boss!”

Bai Xiaochun sat down proudly in the seat of honor, Master God-Diviner standing next to him with a somber expression on his face. Everyone else in the room was bruised and battered as they kowtowed, expressions of fear filling their eyes.

With the exception of Bai Xiaochun, everyone present was in the Foundation Establishment stage. The orange-robed disciples, including the one Bai Xiaochun had met earlier, both had bitter expressions on their faces.

Smacking the arm of the chair, Bai Xiaochun raised his voice and said, “We’re all brothers here! Don’t worry. Now that I’m in charge, we’re going to take over Sky City!”

The thirty members of the Azure Dragon Society exchanged awkward glances, but none of them dared to say a word. To Bai Xiaochun’s pleasure, they simply bowed their heads. With that, he toured the immortal’s cave, picking the largest room for himself, where he sat down to practice some cultivation. As time progressed, he was coming to find that he was getting used to the strong spiritual power and energy drainage in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and because of that, his cultivation speed only continued to increase. For example, his Undying Muscles were making rapid progress.

As for Master God-Diviner, he didn’t have any feelings toward

the Azure Dragon Society, either negative or positive. However, he already felt like he was somewhat in a leadership position, so while Bai Xiaochun was in secluded meditation, he took it upon himself to audit the Azure Dragon Society's account books. He also collected and organized all of the loose merit points.

The Azure Dragon Society cultivators weren't happy about that, but didn't dare to say anything. Nor was there anything they could do about it. Bai Xiaochun was a Gold Core cultivator, and was like an enormous mountain that they could do nothing to contend with. All they could do was accept the situation. In fact, some of them hoped that having a Gold Core cultivator as their boss might put them on the path to a new and better lifestyle.

However, such hopes and dreams gradually faded as time passed. Half a month went by, during which Bai Xiaochun never came out of his room and never did anything. However, considering the income of the Azure Dragon Society, all they had to do was be a bit frugal, and the addition of two new members didn't cause much trouble.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun did have a very big appetite, and also demanded the best quality food. He even required plenty of spirit water to bathe in every day. Because of that, anger began to fester in the hearts of the Azure Dragon Society.

After an entire month went by, even Master God-Diviner was reaching the limits of his patience. Since he was in charge of accounts now, he could see with his own eyes that the Azure Dragon Society's merit points were rapidly dwindling.

Eventually, Master God-Diviner led all of the cultivators to Bai Xiaochun, who was currently in the middle of eating a spirit chicken. Weeping, they began to explain their woes.

"Boss, please spare us. Our meager profits aren't enough to fill your appetite, sir...."

"This isn't going to work long-term, Boss! With expenses like

these, the Azure Dragon Society is going to have to sell our immortal's cave within a few days at most!"

Even Master God-Diviner chimed in to voice his frustration.

Bai Xiaochun immediately felt bad. He had lived so extravagantly in the east district that his current lifestyle seemed like a big step down. However, to others, he seemed to be living in the lap of luxury.

Even worse, he had made significant progress in his cultivation of his Undying Muscles, which caused his energy to be drained at a much higher rate than before. He had tried using some Ultra Fasting Aid Pills, but that could only help on a superficial level.

The truth was that he hadn't even realized that he was eating more food than usual. Considering how small the Azure Dragon Society was, he had already emptied their storerooms.

The orange-robed cultivator that Bai Xiaochun had met in the very beginning looked tearfully at him and said, "Please, Boss, let us off the hook! We've already cut back on food this past month. We increased protection fees and the prices we charge for our Fantasy Pills, but even with that, we're not making enough money to get enough food to eat...."

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat in embarrassment. During his month of secluded meditation, he had completely forgotten about the grand words he had spoken about leading them to take over new territory when he first took over the Azure Dragon Society.

"Wait," he said, "what are these Fantasy Pills you just mentioned?"

"Huh? Oh. Well, Fantasy Pills are a type of spirit medicine that have gotten popular in the past few years. They don't really do much of anything other than induce hallucinations. Of course, the cultivators who consume them can alter the hallucinations to a certain degree, and thus experience any type of fantasy they

wish..... The possibilities are endless....” Bai Xiaochun immediately demanded to see one of the pills, so the orange-robed cultivator pulled a small wooden box out of his bag of holding and handed it over.

Bai Xiaochun accepted the box and opened it. Placed inside was a fingernail-sized black medicinal pill that emanated no medicinal aroma whatsoever. Curious, Bai Xiaochun picked it up to examine it more closely.

Master God-Diviner leaned over to have a look too. He had heard of the pills, of course, but this was his first time seeing one.

Intrigued, Bai Xiaochun used his fingernail to start scraping the black coating off of the pill to see what was inside. The sight of an entire Fantasy Pill being so casually destroyed caused pain to rise up in the hearts of the rest of the Azure Dragon Society.

As Bai Xiaochun scratched the coating off, his expression changed from one of curiosity into surprise. Then his eyes widened. After piercing through the black coating, a wisp of gray smoke began to swirl out from inside.

Upon seeing the smoke, Bai Xiaochun gasped, and Master God-Diviner cried out, “Junior Patriarch, is that your hallucination smoke?!?!”

The Azure Dragon Society cultivators’ jaws dropped, although they really had no idea what Master God-Diviner was talking about.

A grim expression appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face as he reached out and grabbed the strand of gray smoke. After examining it closely, he was absolutely certain that this so-called Fantasy Pill was concocted from the very same hallucination smoke that he had accidentally created when concocting pills back in the Blood Stream Sect!

During the great war of the four sects, he had altered the formula

using the powers of gravity and repulsion, and then used it to create weapons for his compatriots to use.

How could he ever have imagined that he would actually find that same medicine so far away in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect? Clearly, someone had acquired one of his hallucination spheres and then altered the formula, reducing the hallucinatory effects and also changing it so that whoever took the pill could control the hallucination to some extent and become lost in a wonderful world of their own making.

Considering that Bai Xiaochun was an expert in the Dao of medicine, it only took a moment for him to understand everything that had happened.

However, the changes to the medicinal pill were crude at best, and Bai Xiaochun could tell that they could lead to dangerous side-effects. In the end, though, the fact that this pill had been created using his own hallucination smoke left Bai Xiaochun feeling very angry.

“To take without asking is robbery!” he said through gritted teeth. Eyes flashing with anger, he looked at the Azure Dragon Society. “Where did this Fantasy Pill come from?”

The Azure Dragon Society’s two orange-robed cultivators could tell that something was off. The expressions on the faces of Bai Xiaochun and Master God-Diviner were very telling, and they could only guess that some unimaginable turn of events had occurred. However, they didn’t dare to keep any secrets.

“From the Celestial Sky Society!”

“Yeah, the Celestial Sky Society is the biggest organization in Sky City. They have connections to all the businesses in the city, and they also control the city’s underworld. They’re the ones who distribute the Fantasy Pills. We smaller organizations just resell them for a small profit....”

Chapter 388: The Rise Of The Azure Dragon Society

“The Celestial Sky Society again!?” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered with icy coldness. Clenching his hand into a fist around the black medicinal powder in his palm, he looked around at the Azure Dragon Society cultivators and said, “How well do the Fantasy Pills sell?”

The two orange-robed cultivators were panting, and their eyes were shining brightly. One of them quickly responded, “They sell great! We usually distribute a few hundred pills per month, and that’s just us. If you counted all of the north district, the sales would probably be tens of thousands per month. As for Sky City as a whole, probably 200,000 or more. One Fantasy Pill is worth 50 merit points, so that’s the equivalent of at least 10,000,000 merit points per month!”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, his eyes almost turned green, and he began to pant. “If the Celestial Sky Society can use my hallucination smoke to earn merit points, then so can I!

“All of you, wait here for me. I’ll concoct some high-quality Fantasy Pills for you to sell!” With that, he rushed into his room and slammed the door behind him.

The Azure Dragon Society members looked over at Master God-Diviner, hearts filled with curiosity over what was to come.

“Master God-Diviner, is it true that our boss really invented the Fantasy Pill?”

“Is our boss really an apothecary? Can he... can he really concoct Fantasy Pills? Heavens! If that’s true, then good times are definitely to come!!”

Master God-Diviner was more excited than anyone, but he didn’t let it show on his face. Looking around, he smiled faintly, and then

gave a confident nod.

“Don’t you worry,” he said. “I can’t speak for the boss when it comes to other matters, but I can tell you that my junior patriarch is the best there is at medicine concocting!”

When the Azure Dragon Society heard that, their anticipation grew, and it was almost possible to see them calculating their future profits.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun entered his room, he waved his hand, summoning several dozen pill furnaces from his bag of holding. These were furnaces that he had collected back in the River-Defying Sect, and were all different sizes and shapes. Considering how familiar he was with the hallucination smoke, he didn’t plan to produce just one batch of Fantasy Pills at a time. He was going to concoct multiple batches simultaneously!

The main thing he was concerned about was maintaining a standard of quality. After all, these pills weren’t designed to be used in war, so he needed to control the hallucinatory effects. And that meant he had to control the strength of the pills.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun had invented the hallucination smoke to begin with, so his ability to do that vastly exceeded that of the Celestial Sky Society’s apothecary. He was completely confident that he would be able to concoct Fantasy Pills that were on a whole different level than the trash produced by the Celestial Sky Society.

In terms of how to actually contain the hallucination smoke, the black coating on the Celestial Sky Society’s Fantasy Pills had given him a bit of inspiration. After studying it a bit, he improved it, and then managed to actually fuse the smoke itself with the coating!

Time passed, and outside, the Azure Dragon Society waited in eager anticipation. Three days later, Bai Xiaochun emerged, eyes bloodshot but shining with excitement. Waving his sleeve, he sent out countless violet medicinal pills from his bag of holding. As they

piled up on the ground, they formed a small mountain of more than a thousand pills.

The Azure Dragon Society members were shaking with excitement. Then, one of the cultivators clasped hands and bowed to Bai Xiaochun, hurried forward and carefully picked up one of the pills. After placing it into his mouth, he closed his eyes, and within moments, a look of intoxicated pleasure appeared on his face. Throwing his head back, he howled with complete and utter madness.

Clearly, he was experiencing no side-effects. As for the other cultivators, they knew that an important test was being performed, so they watched closely. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, the cultivator still hadn't woken up from his reverie, and everyone else started to get very excited.

“The Celestial Sky Society's Fantasy Pill lasts for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, but boss's pill lasts for even longer than that!”

“And from the look of it, there are no harmful side-effects whatsoever!!” Even as the Azure Dragon Society devolved into a hubbub, another incense stick's worth of time passed. Only then did the cultivator's eyes open.

Although he seemed to be in a bit of a daze, he was clearly satisfied in an unprecedented way. After a long moment passed, he regained his senses. Trembling, he said, “The hallucination was much more realistic than the Fantasy Pills from the Celestial Sky Society! And easier to manipulate! In fact, after a certain point, I completely lost myself! I didn't need to control the hallucination at all: it did everything I wanted. How pure! How unadulterated. This... this is what a Fantasy Pill is supposed to be like!!!”

The rest of the Azure Dragon Society grew even more excited. Panting, the cultivators looked at the pile of Fantasy Pills and realized that it was essentially a huge pile of merit points.

One of the orange-robed cultivators excitedly said, “Boss, if you let us sell these Fantasy Pills, we can clear the stock in two months at the most!”

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun truly was like nobility to these cultivators, a grand figure who existed on a different level than them.

Bai Xiaochun was tired, but looked excited, and was clearly pleased with the quality of the Fantasy Pills he had concocted. Looking at Master God-Diviner, he said, “For now, steer clear of the Celestial Sky Society. When the time comes to butt heads with them, I don’t just want a little scuffle....”

Master God-Diviner saw the gleam in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, and after a moment of thought, nodded. In recent days, he had made some inquiries of his own, and had heard stories of Apothecary Bai from the east district, and the methods the Celestial Sky Society had used in dealing with his Ultra Fasting Aid Pill.

His information had left him ninety percent that Bai Xiaochun and Apothecary Bai were one and the same. As of now, he was completely convinced, and also understood why Bai Xiaochun had disguised his appearance. In fact, he still hadn’t even revealed his name to the Azure Dragon Society.

“Celestial Sky Society....” Master God-Diviner thought, his eyes narrowing. Almost immediately, countless nefarious plans sprang up in his mind, which he began to explain to the rest of the Azure Dragon Society.

Bai Xiaochun remained off to the side, completely satisfied with Master God-Diviner’s performance. With Master God-Diviner at his side, he didn’t feel like a lone wolf anymore.

At this point, he suddenly thought about Xu Baocai and the others. “If only the rest of you merciless betrayers could turn over a new leaf. I can’t believe you just abandoned me....”

Depressed, he went back to his room to practice cultivation.

After Master God-Diviner finished explaining all of his plans, the Azure Dragon Society went to work. They even got their friends and family involved in selling the Fantasy Pills. Considering that the Azure Dragon Society had been around for more than a hundred years, they had good relations with many of the other small organizations in the north district. As such, the Fantasy Pill sales started out with a bang.

Most of the merit points they earned were spent on recruitment efforts. Life was hard in Sky City, so as long as enough merit points were offered, there would be no shortage of people willing to join up.

Bai Xiaochun had plenty to keep him busy. To keep up with demand, he had to concoct more and more Fantasy Pills, until he was concocting them in batches of fifty at a time.

With the Fantasy Pills to support them, the Azure Dragon Society was able to fully call upon its hundred years of connections and history. With the help of Master God-Diviner's plans and schemes, their numbers grew in shockingly rapid fashion.

As their territory expanded, cultivators came constantly, hoping to join. Fantasy Pill sales skyrocketed, until all of the north district was shaken.

Because of how vice-boss Master God-Diviner had arranged everything, the Celestial Sky Society still hadn't noticed what was happening. Although only half a month had passed so far, that half month had seen heaven-shaking, earth-toppling changes for the Azure Dragon Society.

Eventually, the Celestial Sky Society finally took note of what was happening. Ten days after that, it had been a full month since the Azure Dragon Society began their big expansion. They had reinvested all of the merit points into their growth plans, and Bai Xiaochun had even decided to go all in by selling his crocodile

mount to help out. By that point, the Azure Dragon Society had over a thousand members.

In Sky City, that didn't really count as anything amazing in terms of membership, but it was big enough that it was a cause for concern for the Celestial Sky Society. Unfortunately, the Azure Dragon Society was large enough now that using force on them wasn't an option. If any fighting broke out, they might end up breaking the rules of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Not even the Celestial Sky Society dared to push things too far when it came to the official rules of the sect.

Bai Xiaochun was getting better and better at concocting the Fantasy Pills. In fact, sometimes he just set the pill furnaces up and then had Master God-Diviner watch over them until they were ready to be completed.

With more spare time on his hands, Bai Xiaochun was able to focus more easily on cultivation. At the same time, he had returned to his previous extravagant lifestyle. However, he no longer ate the Precious Jade spirit rice. Instead, he favored Heavenspan spirit rice, which was prepared by a special method using Heavenspan River water.

It was the same with the alcohol; he only consumed the best. He had a new mount, too, a blue-eyed qilin lizard. Whenever he went out on that mount, flanked by a hundred followers, he made a very impressive sight.

Time passed. Two more months went by, and not only did the Azure Dragon Society continue to grow, they had expanded their influence into three of the other districts, ensuring that their Fantasy Pill sales only continued to increase. Simultaneously, the Celestial Sky Society's Fantasy Pill sales were dropping significantly.

After all, the two pills were on completely different levels!

Bai Xiaochun's life was getting better and better....

Chapter 389: People Can Live Like This?

“Things here are so expensive!” That was Bai Xiaochun a year ago, when he first arrived in Sky City.

“Hey, this looks pretty nice. It’s a bit expensive but... ah whatever, I’ll just grin and bear it!” That was Bai Xiaochun during his days profiting from the Ultra Fasting Aid Pills.

“This looks great! I’ll take it!” That was Bai Xiaochun when the Azure Dragon Society was beginning to rise to prominence in the north district.

And now....

Currently, Bai Xiaochun was in the Magic Pavilion, looking at about a hundred magical items on display. Sounding very pleased with himself, he began to point at some of the objects. “This one. That one. Oh, that one too.... Those are the three I don’t want. I’ll take everything else!”

The shop attendants were sweating, and their hearts pounding at having such a rich and important person to deal with.

Bai Xiaochun really couldn’t help but live so extravagantly. Whether it was in terms of food, clothing, or anything else, he only got the best. If you added up the value of everything he was currently wearing, it would be valued at something around 7-800,000 merit points. In fact, if he wanted to be promoted to the rainbow district, it would be a very simple thing.

But Bai Xiaochun couldn’t bear to leave Sky City, and was convinced that life on the rainbow definitely wouldn’t be as nice. In fact, he had even made some inquiries, and had been informed that his suspicions were correct; nobody on the rainbow lived like he did now. Therefore, he had made up his mind to spend the rest of his time as a hostage in Sky City.

“Only an idiot would go to that rainbow!” he thought, humming

a little tune as he swaggered through the crowd. When people in the north district caught sight of him, expressions of both envy and respect could be seen in their eyes. He was beside himself with delight, and couldn't stop thinking about how outstanding he was. Everywhere he went, he ended up being the center of attention.

The truth was, he didn't really care much about the money, and didn't even pay much attention to how much the Azure Dragon Society was saving up. As long as there were enough merit points to keep the Azure Dragon Society running, he didn't care.

However, there were a few aspects to his wonderful life that he wasn't too pleased about. Because the Azure Dragon Society had expanded so quickly, their new recruits were a mix of good and bad. Other organizations within Sky City had sent people to infiltrate them, and that was especially true of the Celestial Sky Society.

Furthermore, as the Azure Dragon Society expanded into the other three districts, rumors began to spread.

Some rumors claimed that Bai Xiaochun was none other than the Apothecary Bai from the east district. Others focused on how wicked and violent the Azure Dragon Society was. The third type of common rumor focused on how harmful and addictive the Fantasy Pills supposedly were.

In the end, virtually all of the rumors were about the Azure Dragon Society and Bai Xiaochun, like a wide net slowly being stretched out over the both of them.

Master God-Diviner quickly caught on to this. Other than the first small group of cultivators who had made up the original Azure Dragon Society, few people ever saw him. He was Bai Xiaochun's trusted adviser who lurked in the shadows, unseen by the public. When Bai Xiaochun got Master God-Diviner's report about the rumors, he took it very seriously. He was well aware of the devious ways of the Celestial Sky Society, and could well

imagine that their lack of action during the past few months was because they were waiting for the right moment to deliver a fatal blow.

Considering how seriously Bai Xiaochun took the matter, Master God-Diviner did so as well. He quickly mobilized all of the Azure Dragon Society to try to counteract the rumors. Unfortunately, their work did little to quell the gossip, and in fact, it grew even worse.

One evening, Bai Xiaochun was enjoying his evening meal, an exotic spread of the finest delicacies piled up as high as mountains... with two lovely female cultivators there to serve him.

Master God-Diviner also sat at the table, providing his usual daily report regarding the affairs of the Azure Dragon Society. That was when the news came in....

“Boss, the investigations we started running a few days ago identified one of the main sources of the rumors. We captured him and brought him in, and now we just need you to come decide what to do, boss!”

Bai Xiaochun grunted an acknowledgement as he continued to munch on the chicken leg he had just picked up.

Master God-Diviner smacked his hand down onto the table and gave a cold harrumph. “Bring him here! Let’s see who it is that had the gall to stir up trouble for us!”

Before long, shrill shrieks of terror could be heard, drawing closer and closer to the room where Bai Xiaochun and Master God-Diviner were eating dinner.

“Fellow Daoists of the Azure Dragon Society, spare me! I’m sorry... really, I’m truly sorry....” The shrieking grew louder and louder as two burly Azure Dragon Society cultivators dragged a young man with disheveled hair into the room.

The young man didn’t struggle at all as the two burly cultivators

forced him onto his knees. Not daring to look up, he continued to whimper and cry for mercy.

“Spare me, Boss Azure Dragon. I’m sorry, sir, really, I won’t ever dare to do it again....

“I was a fool to work for the Celestial Sky Society. Please, forgive me, Boss Azure Dragon....” The young man’s wails were truly inspiring of pity.

However, as the young man prattled on, Bai Xiaochun stopped gnawing on the chicken leg and looked closer at him. Next to him, Master God-Diviner’s eyes widened.

Then, the two of them exchanged a glance. Both of them had simultaneously realized that, unexpectedly... the young cultivator begging for mercy... was Xu Baocai!

He had been beaten up, his nose swollen and his hair completely disheveled. His voice was hoarse, and he still hadn’t even dared to lift his head.

A strange expression appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face. Clearing his throat, he finished the chicken leg and then suddenly yelled, “Xu Baocai!!”

Xu Baocai had been kneeling there with his head bowed. In response to Bai Xiaochun’s sudden outburst, he screamed and prepared to continue begging for mercy. However, the voice from just now seemed very familiar, and without even thinking about it, he looked up... to find an unfamiliar face behind the mounds of exquisite delicacies on the table.

The other face at the table was not unfamiliar, though. Shocked, he realized that the second person sitting there was Master God-Diviner.

Xu Baocai’s jaw dropped, and a blank expression filled his eyes. In that moment, the unfamiliar face suddenly blurred, and then... he was looking at a face that was anything but unfamiliar.

Xu Baocai's mind was spinning, and a look of complete and utter incredulity could be seen on his face.

“Bai—” he shrieked. However, before he could finish his sentence, a chicken leg shot through the air and entered his mouth.

Coughing dryly, Bai Xiaochun smiled and said, “How did you get yourself in such a bad situation, Xu Baocai? I mean, I thought I had it bad, but obviously, you have it way worse than me.”

After seeing Bai Xiaochun's reaction, the two men holding Xu Baocai released him. Aware that some things weren't meant for their ears, they quickly departed.

Xu Baocai's eyes were completely bloodshot from crying. As he looked at Bai Xiaochun with his glittering magical treasures, his face glowing with health, his table full of spirit food, Xu Baocai began to pant. The combined value of all of that wasn't quite enough to rise to the yellow-robed disciple level, but it was very close. In sharp contrast, the income he made from selling information couldn't reach that level in a sixty-year-cycle!

Furthermore, the fact that Bai Xiaochun was now Boss Azure Dragon was completely mind-blowing, to the point where tears began to leak out of his eyes....

In addition to all that, the two women waiting upon Bai Xiaochun weren't actual people, they were ingeniously crafted puppets. Xu Baocai trembled at that. Such life-like puppets were astronomically expensive.

Xu Baocai also couldn't help but notice all of the glittering magical treasures that Master God-Diviner was wearing, and how his cultivation base fluctuations were clearly at a higher level than the last time they had met. Much to Xu Baocai's bitterness, Master God-Diviner was obviously getting very close to Core Formation.

By now, he was filled with deep and utter regret regarding his earlier decision to leave the group. As he thought back to the rough

and bitter days he had experienced trying to gather and sell information, he almost couldn't believe he had been so arrogant. Furthermore, how could he have missed the fact that Bai Xiaochun had become the boss of the Azure Dragon Society? The mere thought of how leaving Bai Xiaochun had caused him to lose out on this incredible opportunity left him extremely bitter.

“Junior Patriarch, I really messed up....” he said, staring up piteously at Bai Xiaochun. As of this moment, he had decided in his heart that he would stick with Bai Xiaochun no matter what, even if he tried to drive him away.

“Ah, whatever,” Bai Xiaochun said, waving his hand in grandly dismissive fashion. “I brought you here with me, didn't I? Therefore, I'm responsible for you. You might have mercilessly dumped me early on, but I'm a magnanimous person. From now on, you stick with me, alright?”

Tears of gratitude immediately began to pour down Xu Baocai's face. As for Master God-Diviner, he cleared his throat awkwardly. After all, the words Bai Xiaochun had just uttered sound quite familiar to him....

“It's getting late,” Bai Xiaochun said, “so why don't you go rest up? Tomorrow we can reminisce a bit about old times.” Having finished eating, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, and one of the serving girls came over to wipe his mouth with a handkerchief. Sighing, he stuck his chin up and looked at the girl, then said, “Let's go. Carry me over to my pill concocting station.”

The two serving girls picked Bai Xiaochun up and floated away. He didn't even need to walk at this point....

Master God-Diviner quickly rose to his feet, clasped hands, and bowed. Then, in a voice which sounded well-rehearsed, said, “Farewell, m'lord....”

This display left Xu Baocai shocked into stupefaction. How could he ever have imagined that life could be lived in such a way...?

Chapter 390: Kidnap Bai Xiaochun

“I want to live like this too!!” Xu Baocai wailed inwardly as he watched Bai Xiaochun leave.

A moment later, Master God-Diviner rose from his bow, cleared his throat, and said, “Brother Xu, it’s been a few months. How did you end up in such a bad situation?”

Xu Baocai’s wrath was immediately aroused. After all, it had been the goading of Master God-Diviner that had convinced him to leave Bai Xiaochun to begin with. However, he knew that now was not the time to give voice to his anger. All he could do was put a bitter expression on his face and curse Master God-Diviner inwardly.

Master God-Diviner actually felt a bit bad. Sighing, he said, “Don’t blame me for all this. Even I had no idea that our junior patriarch would rise to such shocking heights.... In Sky City, not everything depends on cultivation base, you know.” With that, Master God-Diviner arranged for a place for Xu Baocai to stay, and even gave him some merit points as pocket money....

As Master God-Diviner led Xu Baocai to his new accommodations, Xu Baocai came to realize that Master God-Diviner also occupied a lofty position within the Azure Dragon Society; all the cultivators in the immortal’s cave who saw him gazed upon him with expressions of deep respect.

Xu Baocai was starting to get more and more excited....

That night, he found it hard to sleep. The next morning at dawn, he walked bleary-eyed out of his room, uttering another oath under his breath.

“I have to become more important to the junior patriarch than Master God-Diviner is!”

With Xu Baocai back, Bai Xiaochun now had one more of his original group of Dao Protectors.

Xu Baocai immediately began to go above and beyond the call of duty when it came to his work, gathering information and propagating rumors. Under his direction, the Azure Dragon Society wasn't just able to quell some of the bad rumors being spread about them, they were actually able to fight back with increasing effectiveness.

Xu Baocai was going all out, using every trick in his book to achieve the best results possible.

Bai Xiaochun had plenty of spare time on his hands. Master God-Diviner took care of day-to-day operations, Xu Baocai was responsible for handling intelligence, and they had a few dozen orange-robed disciples to act as sub-bosses. The Azure Dragon Society was growing more and more stable.

Their expansion hadn't slowed in the least, and in fact, they were still growing. As a result, their Fantasy Pill business grew with shocking speed.

The Celestial Sky Society had been doing plenty of plotting and scheming, but it did little good. They were very capable of handling problems with individuals, but when it came to other large organizations in the city, they fell short. The rise of the Azure Dragon Society had come too quickly and unexpectedly, and because of that, the Celestial Sky Society was completely incapable of dealing with them.

The matter with the rumors had been one part of their initial plan, and although it had started out well, in the end, it fell flat. As their other strategies failed, the Celestial Sky Society grew increasingly enraged by the Azure Dragon Society.

One reason was that everything they did had to be accomplished from the shadows. Eventually, their research into the Fantasy Pill revealed that the boss of the Azure Dragon Society was none other than the very same Apothecary Bai who had created the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill.

Unfortunately, when they tried to investigate Bai Xiaochun's past, they came up with nothing. Not even their agents in the Azure Dragon Society itself could come up with any information. Apparently, very few people within the Azure Dragon Society even knew the level of his cultivation base. Thanks to the training provided by Master God-Diviner, the original members who did know a bit about Bai Xiaochun were circumspect and kept their information to themselves.

Although the Celestial Sky Society was a bit apprehensive that Bai Xiaochun seemed to have come out of nowhere, it wasn't completely unheard of for people in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to be so secretive. As far as looking into the origins of the Fantasy Pill, it might have seemed like a good idea, but the truth was that they had come across the pill completely by accident, and had no idea where it came from. Besides, the eastern cultivation world was a huge place, and the things that went on in the Lower Reaches were of little interest to people upriver.

As the days marched by, the Celestial Sky Society watched the Azure Dragon Society growing larger and larger. Eventually, the Azure Dragon Society's Fantasy Pill sales surpassed the Celestial Sky Society's, and that was the straw that broke the camel's back.

The Celestial Sky Society's headquarters was in the central district of Sky City, and currently, a meeting was going on there to try to decide what to do about the Azure Dragon Society. Some were in favor of continued plotting and scheming, with the eventual goal of breaking the Azure Dragon Society apart. However, a plan like that would take some time to be effective. At one point in the meeting, a cold snort echoed out.

"We can't wait any longer. It's not that our Celestial Sky Society can't use force to solve the problem, it's that we can't afford to break any rules. These people from the Azure Dragon Society are just too stubborn. Look, what's the point of having endless meetings about this? Have you people forgotten how powerful the

Celestial Sky Society is? Let's just go kidnap that Apothecary Bai!"

"But we don't know the level of his cultivation base!" someone protested. "Without that bit of knowledge, trying to do something like that...."

"There are plenty of things under heaven that we don't know. Is that a good reason to just back down? No matter how impressive his background, can he match up to the Celestial Sky Society? We come from a deva clan! As for his cultivation base, there's no way he's a Nascent Soul expert. It's even highly unlikely that he's at Core Formation. If he were, why wouldn't he have been promoted to the rainbow district? Why would he waste his time here concocting medicine?!"

The person making these arguments had a relatively high position in the organization, and as such, no one was willing to go against him. Although most of them weren't quite convinced that it was a good idea, they merely exchanged glances and then held their tongues.

Soon, the Celestial Sky Society was stirring. They didn't have any Core Formation cultivators, only people in the great circle of the Foundation Establishment stage, and a few quasi-Core stage experts. After all, there were only red-and orange-robed disciples in their organization. Those who had reached the yellow-robed level had already left, and couldn't easily be called back.

In order to handle Bai Xiaochun, they gathered ten quasi-Core cultivators, as well as a few dozen in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, plus even more who were in late Foundation Establishment.

After night fell, they headed straight into the north district, toward the immortal's cave that was the headquarters of the Azure Dragon Society.

A group that powerful was strong enough to dominate any other organization in the entire city.

They didn't hold anything back in terms of speed. After all, this was a surprise attack, and the success of their plan hinged on clinching victory in the first move. Although the main plan was to kidnap him, if worse came to worst, they were also prepared to kill him, and deal with the consequences later.

It was a dark and windy night, and Bai Xiaochun was just preparing to settle down cross-legged to start cultivating his Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. After all of his recent cultivation, he was nearing the peak of the Frigid Acolyte level.

The frigid qi which swirled around him would be shocking to anyone who could see it, and caused layers of frost to slowly cake the walls of the room. Thankfully, his cultivation was mostly focused inwardly, because such intensely frigid qi could freeze even Foundation Establishment cultivators to death.

He had just settled his qi and cleared his mind when, all of a sudden, his eyes widened. Looking up, a strange expression appeared on his face. But then, he merely cleared his throat, and then closed his eyes to meditate.

Meanwhile, numerous shadowy figures were approaching the immortal's cave. After exchanging glances, they charged forward, which caused the Azure Dragon Society's defensive spell formation to spring up.

Immediately following that, thunderous booms filled the air as the Celestial Sky Society cultivators unleashed all of their most powerful attacks, blasting the spell formation shield to pieces. The Azure Dragon Society responded immediately, the cultivators inside shouting at the tops of their lungs and unleashing magical techniques in all directions.

"Beat it!" But then the ten quasi-Core cultivators waded into the fight, and no matter how well-prepared the Azure Dragon Society cultivators were, they couldn't deal with such power. They were immediately put on the defensive. By this point, the sub-bosses of

the Azure Dragon Society realized what kind of people they were fighting.

“Quasi-Core stage!” Gasps rang out as the ten quasi-Core cultivators stomped everything in their path as easily as dried weeds.

In almost the exact same instant, the spies that had infiltrated the Azure Dragon Society appeared. “Boss Azure Dragon’s room is right there!”

Arrogant expressions could be seen on the faces of the ten quasi-Core cultivators as they shot toward Bai Xiaochun’s room. Six of them were faster than the others, and it was with complete disdain that they crashed into his room.

As for the other four, they remained outside to prevent anyone from entering.

“After tonight, the Azure Dragon Society won’t have any boss at all!” one of the quasi-Core cultivators said loftily.

The Azure Dragon Society cultivators were getting very nervous, and the cultivators from the Celestial Sky Society were chuckling coldly, convinced that their mission had been accomplished, and that once a boom rang out from that room, they could flee.

However, instead of a boom, their ears were met with silence. After the six quasi-Core cultivators charged into his room, no sounds of combat emerged. It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop!

Expressions of shock began to appear on the faces of everyone in the crowd, with the exception of Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai, who were looking on with disdain.

“What happened...?” someone whispered. Something definitely seemed off about the situation. The door to the room looked like a black mouth ready to swallow up anyone who entered it. Many people present felt chills running down their spine just at the sight

of it.

The four quasi-Core cultivators exchanged glances, and then gritted their teeth to take action. They couldn't just leave now and return with no information to report! Joining their power together, they moved to enter the room. However, before they could reach the door, a blast of frigid qi erupted from the room, filling the area.

As the frigid qi filled them, it felt like they were being frozen in place, causing their eyes to go wide with disbelief. One of the quasi-Core cultivators suddenly began to emit red light as he burned a paper talisman in defense. With the power of the flames assisting him, he managed to stagger backward a few paces, his face ashen. Eyes wide with shock and terror, he cried, "Core Formation!!"

Chapter 391: Are You Fellow Daoist Zhang Dahai?

Even as the words escaped the lips of the cultivator who had spoken them, he felt more frigid qi wrap around him, making it impossible for him to move. As for all of the other cultivators outside in the main area of the immortal's cave, including those from the Azure Dragon Society and the Celestial Sky Society, they were completely and utterly shaken.

“What!?!?”

“Core Formation? Heavens! The boss of the Azure Dragon Society is actually at Core Formation!?!?”

“There are only a few Core Formation experts in all of Sky City! Shouldn't he be in the rainbow district!?!?”

“Dammit! I've never seen a Core Formation cultivator so bored as to forsake missions and merit points just to make a profit with business!!” The Foundation Establishment cultivators from the Celestial Sky Society had expressions of complete shock on their faces as they began to flee.

Even if they had more people on their side, they wouldn't be able to win in a fight against a Core Formation expert. The only thing they could think about now was escaping the area as quickly as possible.

But how could Bai Xiaochun simply let them get away? A cold snort echoed out like thunder from his room, crashing into the ears of all of the Celestial Sky Society cultivators in the area.

Agonized shrieks rang out as those cultivators began to tremble, and their cultivation bases destabilized. Having lost the ability to even move, they fell down out of midair to be immediately captured by the excited cultivators of the Azure Dragon Society.

The fact that a mere snort could do that to such a powerful group

of cultivators was dumbfounding. Of course, the Foundation Establishment cultivators who had just been captured had encountered Core Formation experts before. But from what they could tell, Bai Xiaochun was far, far more terrifying than any such people that they had met.

He hadn't even stepped out of his room; he had simply tossed the quasi-Core cultivators out.

However, that simple action had a profound effect on the Azure Dragon Society cultivators. Their boss was now even more mysterious and unfathomable than before, shocking to a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering degree. As for the people from the Celestial Sky Society, their hearts overflowed with indescribable astonishment and terror.

Bai Xiaochun felt more than pleased about everything, and didn't feel at all like he was a Gold Core expert bullying Foundation Establishment cultivators. In fact, he felt quite the opposite.

"I didn't go looking to cause problems for them," he thought. "They came looking for trouble." Of course, he was also aware that what had just occurred could never be kept a secret; it wouldn't be long before news about him being in the Core Formation stage would fill all of Sky City.

"Well, that's fine," he thought. "I was going to reveal myself soon anyway. To do it this way will make the Azure Dragon Society's expansion go even smoother." Marveling at his own command of strategy, and also at his impressive display of might, he chuckled complacently and then closed his eyes again to continue meditating.

Naturally, Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai took care of everything outside. After taking all of the Celestial Sky Society cultivators into custody, they quickly began to plan what to do next.

The following day, rumors began spreading through all districts

of the city. Furthermore, the stories being told were so vivid and lifelike that everyone could visualize them as if they had been present.

“Did you hear? Last night, the Celestial Sky Society sent ten quasi-Core cultivators, dozens of people in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, and countless late Foundation Establishment cultivators to attack the Azure Dragon Society. However, they were totally routed! In fact, the Azure Dragon Society captured them all!”

“How is that possible...?”

“How is it not possible? Guess what? The boss of the Azure Dragon Society is actually a Core Formation cultivator!!” It didn’t take long for the rumors to fill the city, until everyone was talking about the matter.

After all, Core Formation cultivators were somewhat of a rarity in Sky City. Normally speaking, they would be completely focused on doing missions to earn merit points, not engaging in idle activities with the organizations and gangs in the city.

The four cities at the base of the waterfall were essentially considered to be outside of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, like the outer sects of most other sects. As such, everyone desired to leave them as quickly as possible.

As the gossip proliferated, the Azure Dragon Society’s reputation grew more and more exaggerated. At the same time, the Celestial Sky Society was shaken to its core. As for the leaders in their headquarters, they were enraged to the limit. After a few days passed, they eventually sent an emissary to the Azure Dragon Society and paid a hefty ransom of merit points to get their cultivators back.

The Celestial Sky Society quieted down, and thus ended the first stage of the conflict. It wasn’t that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t considered completely wiping them out and being done with it. After all, the

Celestial Sky Society didn't have any Core Formation cultivators at all. However, having been in Sky City for so long, he had come to an even deeper understanding of the background of the Celestial Sky Society.

The truth was that, in terms of manpower, they didn't really count for much. He really could wipe them out single-handedly if he wanted to. However, the leadership of the organization were all servants in a deva clan, that deva being the very same boy who had brought Bai Xiaochun to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to begin with. After finding that out, Bai Xiaochun abandoned any ideas of wiping them out.

As things continued to ferment in the Celestial Sky Society, the Azure Dragon Society continued to expand and become more famous.

Bai Xiaochun's Fantasy Pills continued to rise in popularity in all five of the city's districts. Eventually, the Azure Dragon Society reached a terrifying level of power.

Their merit point reserves also continued to grow, and more cultivators sought the security that came from being part of their ranks. There were even some smaller cultivator clans and minor organizations that officially joined the Azure Dragon Society.

They had tons of merit points, and a boss in the Core Formation stage. Because of that, it only took one year for them to grow from a small gang into Sky City's second largest organization!

By that point, they had long since moved their headquarters from the original immortal's cave to the very best area in the north district. Were it not for the fact that people couldn't actually own property in Sky City, they would likely have bought all of the real estate in the area and rented it out.

In addition, Bai Xiaochun wasn't busy at all anymore. He had hired a huge team of apothecaries to concoct medicine for him. Of course, he kept the pill formula a secret.

In contrast, Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai were both very busy handling the affairs of the organization. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun thought about his other Dao Protectors, and wondered whether or not they had heard about his recent accomplishments....

“Song Que is definitely out doing missions, so he probably doesn’t know. But Eldest Brother has surely caught wind of the situation. Why hasn’t he come looking for me?”

Even as he contemplated the matter, Chen Manyao showed up. She simply walked through the entrance of the immortal’s cave and said that she was Madam Bai, the Daoist partner of the Azure Dragon Society’s boss. Considering that the boss of the Azure Dragon Society was like the sun in the noonday sky, that made Chen Manyao extremely important as well. No one was willing to offend her, and they quickly escorted her to see Bai Xiaochun.

After listening to her explanation about why she’d left and then come back, Bai Xiaochun felt a bit of a headache coming on. Realizing that he couldn’t send her away, he sighed and agreed to let her stay.

Because she continued to claim to be Bai Xiaochun’s Daoist partner, everyone in the Azure Dragon Society treated her with extreme respect. Bai Xiaochun didn’t feel like dealing with the matter, so he focused on Big Fatty Zhang. Worried that he might be in some sort of danger, he passed down orders that the entire Azure Dragon Society was to be on the lookout for him. Of course, in the orders, he didn’t use the nickname Big Fatty Zhang, but rather his friend’s true name, Zhang Dahai.

The Azure Dragon Society was a huge, powerful group, so tracking down a single person was not a very difficult task. That was especially true considering that the orders had come from the boss himself. In fact, to many cultivators, it was an opportunity to make a name for themselves in the organization, and so soon, everyone was looking for Big Fatty Zhang.

It was impossible to prevent the Celestial Sky Society from hearing about the matter, and they also began a search for Big Fatty Zhang. There was nothing that could be done about the matter, and Bai Xiaochun knew that, so he also sent people to keep watch over the Celestial Sky Society.

As the search went on for Big Fatty Zhang....

There was a small cultivator clan in the west district whose clan chief had just recently joined the Azure Dragon Society and had quickly risen to the rank of sub-boss. He had just been given the notice handed down to look for Big Fatty Zhang, and as soon as he saw the picture of the subject of the search, beads of sweat popped out on his forehead.

For some reason, the person the boss was looking for looked very much like a spirit enhancer who had accidentally destroyed one of his magical items about six months before in a failed spirit enhancement attempt. That young spirit enhancer had claimed to be surnamed Zhang. In his fury, this sub-boss had imprisoned the spirit enhancer and forced him to perform spirit enhancements day and night to make up for the loss.

Something like that didn't involve killing, so the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect didn't care about it. Eventually, the sub-boss had forgotten about the lone spirit enhancer, but now that he suddenly came to mind, the man started trembling.

He thought back to when he'd apprehended the spirit enhancer, and remembered thinking that as long as the young man didn't die, he could use him to perform spirit enhancements in the future. Regret and nervousness gripped him as he realized that it was possible the young man very well could have died since then. Without any hesitation, he began to rush toward the clan's spirit enhancement workstation.

Even from a distance, he could make out the gaunt and shriveled Big Fatty Zhang, his eyes listless as he weakly held a flying sword

out in front of him. Off to the side, one of the clan servants was berating him loudly.

“Hurry it up! If you destroy another flying sword, then I’m gonna–”

Before the servant could finish speaking, he saw the clan chief rushing over, and immediately put on a fawning expression. Just when he was going to clasp hands in greeting, the clan chief slapped him across the side of the face, sending him spinning through the air with a squawk to land about 30 meters away.

“Dammit! I can’t believe you were being so rude to my honored guest!”

When Big Fatty Zhang saw this happen, he shivered and looked over nervously at the clan chief.

However, the clan chief was even more nervous than him. Hurriedly helping Big Fatty Zhang to his feet, he cautiously asked, “Are you Fellow Daoist Zhang Dahai?”

Chapter 392: Dao Protector Reunion

In Big Fatty Zhang's mind, this clan chief was a completely domineering figure, and he had never before seen him act this way or speak with such courtesy. In this part of the city, he was the kind of person who could bring a torrent of trouble to anyone who bothered him. Not only was he an orange-robed disciple, he was also the chief of an entire cultivator clan!

Supposedly, this clan had once produced a cultivator who went all the way to the Nascent Soul stage, and although he had long since perished, he had left an impression on the cultivators in this part of the city that continued on down to this day.

Big Fatty Zhang had started out very confident in being able to make a living with his spirit enhancement abilities, but after a string of failures, including one very important magical item belonging to this clan chief, he had ended up being imprisoned in their clan headquarters. Half a year had gone by, and Big Fatty Zhang felt like he was descending into insanity. He didn't do anything other than perform spirit enhancements, and never got enough food to make him full. Were it not for his intense determination to keep living, he probably would have long since died from hunger and exhaustion.

He was instinctively afraid of the clan chief already, but to hear the man speak his own name left Big Fatty Zhang trembling even harder than before. However, deep in his heart, he also felt anger, and that seeped into his eyes. If looks could kill, then the way he was staring at this clan chief right now would cause the man to explode violently.

"Um... Fellow Daoist, please, just tell me. Are you Zhang Dahai?!" The clan chief's anxiety was mounting, and he didn't dare to even think about simply killing the young spirit enhancer to silence him. The Azure Dragon Society was too big and powerful, and the matter would definitely be found out eventually. If the

boss found out he'd imprisoned Zhang Dahai, only to kill him later, the entire clan would be doomed.

"Yeah, that's right!" Big Fatty Zhang yelled. "I'm Zhang Dahai!!"

The clan chief felt like his head was about to explode. He started shaking physically, and his pupils constricted into tiny dots. To see him reacting this way gave Big Fatty Zhang a very bad feeling. Suddenly feeling weak at the knees, he cursed inwardly and was just about to say something more when the clan chief unexpectedly spun to face the clan servant he had just knocked to the side.

"You dumbass servant!" he shouted. "Don't you remember how I told you this young man was an honored guest? You're supposed to respect guests! You were instructed to take care of him, but instead, you used him to screw me over!!" With that, he raised his hand and slapped the servant again, sending him spinning off to the side once more.

Blood sprayed out of the servant's mouth, along with a bitter scream. Completely bewildered by why his master would suddenly act this way, he was just about to beg for mercy when the clan chief yelled, "Men, get this servant out of my sight! Cripple his cultivation base and throw him into the dungeon!"

With that, the clan chief hurried over and helped Big Fatty Zhang to his feet. Smiling at him amiably, he tried to sound as apologetic as possible as he said, "Brother Zhang, all of this was a big mistake. If you want me to execute that servant, just say the word!"

"Ai, you must have had it so difficult these days, Brother Zhang." Patting the dust off of the dumbfounded Big Fatty Zhang's shoulders, the clan chief supported him by the arm as he led the way to the clan's main hall.

Raising his voice, he called out, "Prepare the best spirit food and the finest liquor as my apology to Brother Zhang!"

Within moments, the entire clan was buzzing with activity.

Although everyone was scratching their heads in confusion, none of them dared to question what was happening. An entire table of spirit food was prepared, and the clan chief himself waited upon Big Fatty Zhang. He even called over some female clan members to sit next to him.

Big Fatty Zhang was more taken aback than ever at this sudden change of events. Never had the clan chief acted so politely, and he couldn't fathom why he would be acting like this. However, after seeing all the spirit food on the table, he put the matter out of mind and immediately began wolfing it down.

The clan chief stood off to one side, trembling inwardly, but keeping a smile plastered on his face as he continuously served new dishes. Furthermore, the beautiful female clan members continued to give Big Fatty Zhang meaningful glances. Although they were somewhat confused about why they had been told to do this, they didn't hold back, and one of them even began to gently massage his neck. The others kept his drinking glass full, and even chatted with him in subdued tones.

Although Big Fatty Zhang was feeling very nervous about what was going on, he simply gritted his teeth, threw caution to the wind, and enjoyed what was happening.

Two hours later, Big Fatty Zhang had eaten and drunk to his heart's content. Finally, he slapped the table and looked over at the clan chief with a glare.

“Alright, just what is going on here!?”

The clan chief couldn't keep the bitterness out of his voice as he replied, “Brother Zhang, what happened before really was a big mistake on my part. Please, don't take it to heart.” Clasp ing his hands, he eyes the female clan members, then gritted his teeth and continued, “Brother Zhang, if you don't despise them too much, why not just take these daughters of the clan as your own!?”

The young women gasped, and opened their mouths to protest,

but the clan chief's fierce glare kept them silent.

Big Fatty Zhang was scared speechless, and more nervous than ever. He simply couldn't decide what to do. After a moment passed, he asked, "Why are you doing this...?"

Considering how Big Fatty Zhang was pressing the issue, the clan chief didn't dare to try to pull the wool over his eyes. Taking a deep breath, he said, "Brother Zhang, the boss of the Azure Dragon Society is scouring the city looking for you...."

"Azure Dragon Society?" Big Fatty Zhang said, looking confused. He had been imprisoned back when the Azure Dragon Society was first starting to rise to prominence. Back then, there had been plenty of people who had never even heard of them, including Big Fatty Zhang.

Considering the expression on Big Fatty Zhang's face, the clan chief quickly explained how, during the past few months, the Azure Dragon Society had risen to the heights of glory. Big Fatty Zhang was now shaking harder than ever.

"Somebody important like that is looking for me?" He grabbed a big flagon of alcohol and took a long drink.

Before long, evening was falling. Peppering Big Fatty Zhang with nonstop apologies, the clan chief led him out and toward the north district to finally meet the illustrious Boss Azure Dragon.

Along the way, Big Fatty Zhang heard a lot of people on the street talking about the Azure Dragon Society, and his nervousness grew. Soon, the moon hung high overhead, and the two of them were in the north district, right outside of a sprawling immortal's cave.

It had eighteen enormous stone golems standing guard outside, along with countless cultivators. Inside, it was just barely possible to see rank upon rank of powerful cultivators patrolling about.

Glittering spell formations surrounded the immortal's cave, and high in the sky above it was a magical projection of an azure

dragon. It was extremely realistic, and a mere glance at it would be enough to fill anyone's heart with shock.

"Th-this... this is the Azure Dragon Society?" Big Fatty Zhang asked hesitantly. The clan chief nodded. Of course, this wasn't the clan chief's first time coming here, but he was still extremely nervous.

Big Fatty Zhang was already having trouble breathing, and truly could not fathom why an important person like the boss of the Azure Dragon Society would possibly be looking for him. However, he had no choice but to follow the clan chief as he cautiously headed toward the main gate and reported in.

Before he could even finish making an explanation, three beams of light shot out from inside the Azure Dragon Society. The person in the lead had a long orange robe on, and wore a beautiful headdress embroidered with an azure dragon. It was none other than Bai Xiaochun!

He was festooned with various defensive jade jewelry, and glittered with dazzling magical treasures. He even had a halo hovering above his head, and couldn't have looked more impressive. Flanking him were Xu Baocai and Master God-Diviner. By this point, Xu Baocai looked very different than he had when he'd first been reunited with Bai Xiaochun. His face had a healthy glow, and he was also covered with all sorts of glittering treasures. He looked like the picture of riches and honor.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun appeared, the Azure Dragon Society was thrown into a hubbub. Cultivators and maidservants poured out from inside the immortal's cave, and the cultivators who were already outside trembled and dropped to their knees to kowtow.

"Greetings, Boss!"

"Greetings, Boss!!" Their cries created a rumbling like that of thunder. At that point, Big Fatty Zhang realized to his shock that the clan chief next to him had also dropped to his knees and was

kowtowing.

Big Fatty Zhang was the only one left standing, his eyes wide as he stared in shock at Master God-Diviner, Xu Baocai, and Bai Xiaochun.

“Ninth Fatty!!” Big Fatty Zhang said, completely flabbergasted.

“Eldest Brother!” Bai Xiaochun cried. Laughing loudly, he stepped forward and embraced Big Fatty Zhang. Big Fatty Zhang returned the embrace heartily, looking like he had just been reunited with family.

When the clan chief from the little cultivator clan saw that, his heart shook with fear that Big Fatty Zhang would try to get revenge on him, and put a look of ultimate remorse and supplication on his face.

Big Fatty Zhang was so excited that he didn’t even notice how the clan chief was looking at him. His laughter mingled with Bai Xiaochun’s as the two of them excitedly headed toward the immortal’s cave.

Chapter 393: File A Grievance....

Of the five Dao protectors Bai Xiaochun had brought with him, the only one unaccounted for was Song Que. The other four had all returned to Bai Xiaochun's side.

Even Chen Manyao was behaving herself. To Bai Xiaochun, it felt completely wonderful to have people relying on him for reasons other than his cultivation base. It was something he often thought about during his meditation sessions.

Now that Big Fatty Zhang was back, Bai Xiaochun felt as if a huge weight had been lifted from his heart. Big Fatty Zhang was different than Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai. Their friendship had begun on the very first day that Bai Xiaochun became a part of the cultivation world.

In fact, almost as soon as Big Fatty Zhang arrived at the Azure Dragon Society, he became its second most important figure, with a standing higher than Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai. Of course, Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai took this in stride; they were well aware of how close Bai Xiaochun and Big Fatty Zhang were.

As the Azure Dragon Society expanded and grew more powerful, not only did they compete with the Celestial Sky Society with their Fantasy Pills, but in other areas as well.

However, such efforts couldn't be met with success quickly, and needed a lot of merit points to be invested. At the moment, the Fantasy Pills were still the bread and butter of the Azure Dragon Society.

Bai Xiaochun didn't actually have a hand in such matters; he delegated the authority to Big Fatty Zhang and the others. Overall, Bai Xiaochun was completely pleased with how amazing he was. The only thing that he wasn't happy about was that he actually didn't own his own immortal's cave; everything in Sky City was

rented out by the sect.

After making some inquiries, he learned that it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find someone in Sky City who owned their own property. The only way to get one would be to have someone very powerful backing you.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun didn't have any powerful backers, so he had no choice other than to abandon the idea. Instead, he focused on his cultivation, using much of his profits from the Azure Dragon Society to purchase spirit medicines and spirit food to increase the speed of his progress.

It was only after spending about 1,000,000 merit points that he finally reached the point where he had successfully cultivated the third level of the Undying Live Forever Technique from the toes of his left foot all the way up to his calf!

When that part of his leg pulsed with the power of his Undying Muscles, he could send astonishing fluctuations rolling out from it, fluctuations that could shake heaven and earth with intense power.

The power in his left leg vastly surpassed that of his right leg, and was the source of the most incredibly fleshly body power he had at his disposal.

After a few tests, Bai Xiaochun realized that he hadn't just experienced an increase in strength, but also speed. At the moment, his left leg could move at least twice as fast as his right!

Of course, even before that, he had been one of the top figures in his cultivation level in terms of speed, thanks to his Undying Heavenly King Body and Heaven-Dao Gold Core. Therefore, anyone who saw his speed now would be left gasping with shock!

In fact, thanks to this increase in speed, Bai Xiaochun actually felt as if the other parts of his body were sluggish.

“One day, when I finish cultivating the Undying Muscles, then

when I burst out with full speed....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone with anticipation.

Back in the Middle Reaches, in the River-Defying Sect, it would have taken a very long time to reach this point, even with the help of the Blood Ancestor. But here at the source of the river, in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the indescribably strong spiritual power, plus the vastly superior spirit medicines and spirit food, made everything completely different!

The only catch was that acquiring those resources required merit points, and a lot of them. Thankfully, that was exactly what Bai Xiaochun had!

In addition to his success with his Undying Muscles, the vast quantity of merit points at his disposal ensured that his Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation also advanced by leaps and bounds.

The Heavenspan River water here was much different than in the Lower or Middle Reaches. It was so much stronger and purer that the lesser versions could hardly compare. At one point, he even spent tens of thousands of merit points to buy an entire a bowlful.

Eventually, he reached the peak of the Frigid Acolyte level. With the wave of a hand, he could cause frigid coldness to fill a 300-meter area, within which would appear a single blurry frigid shadow.

Bai Xiaochun could switch positions with the frigid shadow at will; if used correctly in combat, it was a trick that could help him win in an unexpected way, and perhaps even turn a defeat at the hands of a powerful opponent into a victory!

Bai Xiaochun was very excited about this, and even set up a special training ground to practice in. After sealing the place so that he was completely alone, he performed some tests. Upon summoning the frigid shadow in a location inside the 300-meter frozen area, he could take a step forward and then instantly take

the shadow's place. It was almost like a teleportation! After familiarizing himself with the process, he was left so excited that it was difficult to put into words.

After reaching the peak of the Frigid Acolyte level, his techniques all improved, and his cultivation base also advanced. Because of the frigid qi buildup in his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, his cultivation base was now at the peak of the early Gold Core stage!

With one more step forward, he could break through into mid Gold Core!!

Bai Xiaochun was already certain of how to head in the direction of that breakthrough. It was none other than reaching the Frigid Adept level!

“Once I reach the Frigid Adept level, I’ll step into the mid Gold Core stage!

“And that day isn’t too far off!” He threw his head back and laughed uproariously, musing that coming to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect really was the right choice. In fact, if he had known how wonderful Sky City was going to be, he would have come earlier.

Even as Bai Xiaochun reveled in complacency, the hostilities between the Celestial Sky Society and the Azure Dragon Society were increasing. In fact, numerous meetings had been held in the Celestial Sky Society to try to figure out what to do about Bai Xiaochun and the Azure Dragon Society.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun was a Core Formation cultivator, something that had caught them completely unawares, and had also lost them the initiative. Their previous failed attempt to take him out had also significantly damaged their awe-inspiring reputation.

Of even greater significance than that was that the sheer size of the Azure Dragon Society made any schemes and plots they

hatched relatively useless. Furthermore, in terms of their ability to use force, although they had a powerful background, they didn't have even a single Core Formation cultivator in their organization.

Although everyone talked about how they came from a clan with a deva patriarch, the truth was that the top orange-robed disciples in the Celestial Sky Society were nothing but servants in that clan. As such, their background sounded very impressive, but nobody in the clan really cared that much about them.

They really had no choice other than to report the matter to some of their superiors and hope that someone would show up to help them. However, despite having made several such requests over the past months, nobody had paid them any attention. Things to do with Core Formation cultivators weren't very important to the clan as a whole, and definitely wouldn't mobilize the forces of the entire clan to help them. The Celestial Sky Society would have to handle the matter on their own.

After waiting for quite some time without getting a response, the people in the Celestial Sky Society realized what was going on, and yet, weren't willing to just give in.

“We can't let things keep going on this way!”

“That's right. That damned Azure Dragon Society rose up too quickly and violently. If we don't do something soon, we're going to be playing second fiddle to them forever!”

“But the clan has been ignoring us. Ai.”

“I can't believe we haven't been able to turn up any information about the background of Boss Azure Dragon. There's something fishy going on, I'm telling you! It's almost as if someone has wiped out all records of him!”

As the discussion played out, a shadowy figure sat off to the side, a person who seemed to be wreathed in flickering darkness. Suddenly, he spoke in a sinister voice.

“Since the clan is ignoring us and Boss Azure Dragon is too mysterious, then why don’t just take the Fantasy Pills out of the picture? That would cripple the Azure Dragon Society, resolve this deadlock, and also make it more clear how to completely finish things.

“As for exactly how to take the Fantasy Pills out of the picture, it’s simple. You people just never put enough thought into it. Just file a grievance with the sect regarding Fantasy Pills!!

“After all, they still aren’t really legal to sell!” His words were met with silence, and yet, all of the Celestial Sky Society’s leaders’ eyes began to shine brightly.

The person who had just spoken was none other than the boss of the Celestial Sky Society.

After the decision was formalized, the Celestial Sky Society sprang into action. They compiled a list of all the supposed side effects and harmful aspects of the Fantasy Pill and reported them to the sect. Furthermore, they backed the effort with all the money and connections they had at their disposal.

Three days later, an order came down from Sky Quarter Rainbow, which was announced everywhere in Sky City.

The Sky Quarter peak lord had ordered that disciples were forbidden from purchasing Fantasy Pills!!

And there was more! A jade slip shot through the air in a bright beam of light toward the immortal’s cave that was the headquarters of the Azure Dragon Society. It pierced through all of the defensive spell formations like a hot knife through butter before coming to a stop before Bai Xiaochun. Then, scintillating light burst out from it, along with a profoundly ancient voice.

“Hostage Bai Xiaochun from the River-Defying Sect is to report immediately to the Sky Quarter peak lord!”

Chapter 394: Sky Quarter Rainbow

Bai Xiaochun had just been in the middle of performing some breathing exercises, so the sudden arrival of the jade slip caused his eyes to go wide. Shivering, he said, “The Sky Quarter peak lord? He wants to see me?”

“What does he want? I don’t even know him!” From the tone he had detected in that voice just now, the speaker hadn’t seemed very pleased.

“What’s going on!?” Even as Bai Xiaochun’s nervousness began to mount, Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai showed up, serious expressions on their faces. Big Fatty Zhang seemed very angry, and the other leaders all looked extremely anxious.

Xu Baocai gritted his teeth and said, “Junior Patriarch, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect just issued orders prohibiting the trafficking of Fantasy Pills! This is definitely the handiwork of the Celestial Sky Society. They’re trying to cut off our main source of income!”

Xu Baocai’s life had been quite comfortable lately, and he had very much enjoyed seeing merit points rolling in without stop. But now, it seemed that it all was coming to an end; how could he not get nervous?

“What do we do, Boss?”

“Without Fantasy Pills, the Azure Dragon Society is in great danger!”

“That’s right. We’ve been expanding too quickly recently, and the news about the restrictions on the Fantasy Pills is definitely going to spread like wildfire through the city....”

Xu Baocai wasn’t the only nervous one. The other cultivators in the Azure Dragon Society were all thinking the same thing. After all, the vast majority of the Azure Dragon Society’s income came from Fantasy Pills.

Without those pills, the Azure Dragon Society's enormous size would quickly become its biggest disadvantage. After all, to maintain its current size required a significant merit point expenditure in salaries.

If too much time went by, they would be forced to cut back in certain areas, and the Celestial Sky Society would definitely take advantage of that. They would go in for the kill, and try to destroy all the advances that the Azure Dragon Society had made in the past.

In the final analysis, the biggest problem was that the Azure Dragon Society didn't have any resources built up. Compared to the Celestial Sky Society, they were like a huge, empty building, fundamentally unstable and prone to collapse at any moment.

Sadly, other than Bai Xiaochun's Dao protectors, virtually all of the other Azure Dragon Society cultivators present were all starting to ponder what move to make next.

If the leadership was doing that, it almost wasn't necessary to mention the ordinary cultivators who made up the rest of the organization. Bai Xiaochun knew that if he didn't handle this situation well, the entire Azure Dragon Society could collapse.

However, now wasn't the moment to ponder the Azure Dragon Society's situation. The glittering jade slip still hovered in front of him, and even as everyone who had just rushed in was still peppering him with questions, his eyes flashed, and he cleared his throat.

"What are you getting so anxious for!?" Everyone's mouths snapped shut. Bai Xiaochun was the boss of the Azure Dragon Society, and a Gold Core cultivator. Even more importantly, he was the inventor of the Fantasy Pill. Although he didn't have much of a role in the daily operations of the organization, the Azure Dragon Society was his, and he was the most stabilizing force within it.

“I know the Celestial Sky Society has powerful backers, but did you really think I wouldn’t have some too?!” With that, he rose to his feet, stuck his chin up, and the pointed at the jade slip.

“Look at that, all of you. What is it?” Everyone looked over in surprise, and soon people realized that it was an object from the rainbow district.

“That’s the command medallion of the peak lord of Sky Quarter Rainbow!!”

“I knew I saw a beam of light flying down from Sky Quarter Rainbow! So, it came here. It was actually a message for our exalted boss!” The cultivators of the Azure Dragon Society couldn’t help but gasp as they looked over at Bai Xiaochun, eyes shining with bright light.

“Don’t tell me that the boss actually has special connections with Sky Quarter itself?!?!” As everyone was reeling in shock, Xu Baocai, Master God-Diviner, and Big Fatty Zhang were all staring at Bai Xiaochun with blank looks, completely unable to wrap their minds around how he could possibly be connected to the Sky Quarter peak lord.

“As long as you understand the situation,” Bai Xiaochun said coolly. “Well, now I’m going to go pay a formal visit to the Sky Quarter peak lord. We’ll figure out our next step after I get back!” With that, he waved his sleeve, grabbing the jade slip and walking out the chamber.

As he left, all of the Azure Dragon Society cultivators clasped hands and bowed. Although they were still somewhat worried, they felt much more relieved than they had been moments before. That attitude would have a big influence on the cultivators under their control, and at the very least, would ensure that the restrictions placed on Fantasy Pills would not cause chaos in the Azure Dragon Society, at least not for the time being.

Bai Xiaochun’s act had been pulled off perfectly. Even Big Fatty

Zhang had been taken in, and watched Bai Xiaochun with both confidence and anticipation.

However, as soon as Bai Xiaochun left the Azure Dragon Society's immortal's cave, he almost collapsed into tears. Moments before, he had been standing tall and straight, but now he was wracked with anxiety. At the same time, his rage toward the Celestial Sky Society burned hotter than ever. However, there was no time now to dwell on his anger.

“What does the Sky Quarter peak lord want with me...?” he thought nervously as he headed toward a certain location in the central district of Sky City that led to the rainbow district.

This was where newly-promoted yellow-robed disciples would come to head to the rainbow. As for red-and orange-robed disciples, they could only enter this area if they had special invitations or orders.

Upon reaching the teleportation portal, he produced the jade slip and took a deep breath. Trying to look solemn and tragic, as if he were going for broke, he stepped forward into the portal.

Rumbling sounds could be heard, along with the dazzling light of teleportation, which wrapped around him for a moment before fading away, and him along with it.

When he reappeared, he was in the third level of rainbows at the bottom of the waterfall, on the second rainbow.

As soon as he materialized, he looked around to find himself surrounded by richly ornamented buildings connected by green jade paths. Immortal trees flourished everywhere, and spiritual energy wafted about, making the place seem like the picture of a celestial paradise.

There were ponds and immortal's caves, as well as domesticated spirit creatures frolicking within the trees and waters. Soft, seven-colored light permeated the entire area, creating a spectacular

scene of beauty.

Yellow-robed disciples could be seen everywhere, sitting in meditation or strolling about. Everything was quiet and peaceful, completely lacking the raucous brouhaha common in Sky City. There were flowing crowds of people, and yet all of the cultivators looked cold and indifferent. Each and every one seemed tall and slender, with mysterious light swirling around them that made them seem like something from beyond the mortal world.

Apparently, there was some sort of restrictive spell in place that made the strong spiritual energy softer and more gentle, and ensured that one's energy was not drained while absorbing it.

Bai Xiaochun was immediately taken aback. This was his first time seeing the world that existed on the rainbow, and he couldn't help but rub his eyes to make sure he wasn't seeing things. Sure enough, it was all there. One interesting thing he noted was that although the rainbow district was large, it was only about half the size of Sky City.

Even as Bai Xiaochun looked around in amazement, the air in front of him distorted, and a female yellow-robed disciple stepped out of thin air. She had long flowing hair, and lovely facial features, although her expression was a bit cold. Looking Bai Xiaochun up and down, she said, "You're Bai Xiaochun?"

A serious expression took over Bai Xiaochun's eyes. This young woman was at the peak of the early Core Formation stage, just like him, and yet the method she had used to appear in front of him was quite astonishing.

This was his first time encountering someone in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect who was in the same cultivation level as himself, and also his first time seeing first hand some of the divine abilities and magical techniques that he had only just heard about so far.

If her cultivation base had been higher than his, he might have reacted differently. But considering they were in the same level, he

decided that he couldn't let himself look weak, so he proudly stated, "Yeah, I'm Bai Xiaochun. Who are you?"

"Come with me. My Master wants to see you. By the way, watch your step around here. Core Formation cultivators can get killed here very easily if they get lost." With that, she turned and began to walk off.

Her words made Bai Xiaochun feel more nervous than ever as he hurried to follow her. The two of them became two beams of bright light that shot off into the distance.

As they flew along, Bai Xiaochun looked down at the things passing by below, and quickly came to realize how the Sky Quarter Rainbows were set up. There were five ring-shaped districts that seemed to be filled with more coldness and pressure the further they went toward the center.

Eventually, the young woman led him to the middle ring, where a shockingly tall mountain peak became visible. It was surrounded by dazzling seven-colored light, and was completely devoid of any type of plants or vegetation. The only thing visible on the peak was an enormous temple, gray in color and surrounded by an indescribable energy. Just by looking at it, Bai Xiaochun got the feeling that it wasn't a temple, but rather, an ancient wild beast.

The young woman came to a stop after leading Bai Xiaochun to the foot of the mountain. Then, she stepped back a few paces, maintaining her silence. Even as Bai Xiaochun was wondering what exactly she was doing, an ancient voice suddenly drifted out from the temple at the peak of the mountain.

"Admit to your crimes, Bai Xiaochun!"

Chapter 395: Seeing Du Lingfei Again!!

In response to the words, Bai Xiaochun's anxiety suddenly faded away, and he sighed inwardly. At the same time, he inwardly thanked the Senior cultivators back in the Spirit Stream Sect and the Blood Stream Sect, who had often scared the living daylights out of him by uttering such words.

As soon as the words registered in his mind, he was relatively certain that he wasn't in trouble. Whenever members of the Senior generation spoke like that, it was like they were brandishing a club, only to hand out rewards afterward.

Having realized this, Bai Xiaochun immediately knew what to do next. Gasping, he plastered an expression onto his face that was a mix of bitterness, defiance, and anger. At the same time, he tried to look like he felt deep respect for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and hoped to rise within its ranks, but simultaneously, missed the River-Defying Sect. As these expressions all played out on his face, it created the perfect complicated look that a hostage should have.

As he stood there silently, he clasped hands and bowed deeply, as though he had thousands of words he wished to speak, and yet didn't. Instead, he was simply waiting to see what would happen to him.

Although he didn't say anything, his expression spoke volumes.

Bai Xiaochun had mastered this tactic of responding to accusations with righteous indignation back in the Blood Stream Sect, and had always found it to be particularly effective.

As for the cold-faced young woman, when she saw the expression on Bai Xiaochun's face, her jaw dropped.

The voice which had just spoken out from the mountain maintained silence for a moment before continuing, "Fine, we'll let the matter drop. After all, you're a hostage from the River-

Defying Sect, which is an important sect connected to the Sky Quarter. Give me the formula for the Fantasy Pill. It has some blemishes, but at the same time, could come in useful.”

Bai Xiaochun hesitated, causing a protracted moment of silence. Then, the ancient voice once again spoke from within the seven-colored light shining out of the temple. “I won’t force you to give it to me for free. I’ll pay you 1,000,000 merit points, and immediately promote you to a yellow-robed disciple. Henceforth, you will no longer reside in Sky City!”

When the young female cultivator heard this, her eyes went wide, and she looked up at the temple in shock.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very pleased with himself, but didn’t let that show on his face. Actually, he was feeling a bit of disdain at the moment. After all, he had plenty of merit points, and if he’d wanted to be promoted to the rainbow district, he could have done it long ago. He often spent tens of thousands of merit points on a single meal, not to mention all of the puppet maid servants he had to wait upon him.

Plus, he had lots of subordinates to take care of. In the end, his monthly expenses probably exceeded 1,000,000 merit points.

“Only a complete moron would come here,” he thought. “Life is great back in Sky City! I’m super powerful, my cultivation goes really quickly, and nobody causes me any problems!” Bai Xiaochun had already decided that he didn’t want to be promoted to the rainbow district, and this trip had proved it. Everyone had cold expressions here, and it didn’t look like a fun place at all.

Upon hearing the peak lord’s offer, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, clasped hands and bowed deeply, his expression more somber than ever.

Sounding profoundly righteous, he spoke out in a loud voice, “Peak Lord, of course disciple is willing to give you the pill formula. As for the merit points, I don’t want them. I have no

desire to become a yellow-robed disciple in that fashion. That's simply not my style. Bai Xiaochun will become a yellow-robed disciple with the merit points he earns with his own two hands!"

The cold-looking young female cultivator looked at Bai Xiaochun again. Moments ago, her Master the peak lord's offer had been completely astonishing to her. In all her years as his apprentice, this was her first time hearing him be so generous. But then, her shock only continued to grow as Bai Xiaochun refused the offer!

She couldn't help but gasp. Never before had she seen anyone turn down such an opportunity; 1,000,000 merit points was a huge sum to any cultivator. It was the type of savings most people spent an entire sixty-year-cycle building up.

As for the peak lord, were it not for the fact that he had already heard about Bai Xiaochun's antics in Sky City, he would also have been shocked. After all, throughout all his years serving as the peak lord, he had never seen any disciple turn down the opportunity to become a yellow-robed disciple.

Up in the temple, he was sitting there with an odd expression on his face, looking off to the side, where stood the vague image of a white-robed young woman. Melancholy and other mixed emotions could be seen on her face as she looked at Bai Xiaochun.

She seemed to exist somewhere between illusory and corporeal, and was difficult to see clearly. However, from the way the air around her distorted and filled with rifts, it was possible to determine that she either had a shocking cultivation base, or possessed some unimaginably powerful precious treasure!

When the young woman didn't react to Bai Xiaochun's statement, the Sky Quarter peak lord's frustration rose. The truth was that he didn't need the medicine formula at all, nor did he want it. However, someone who he didn't dare to provoke had tasked him with watching out for Bai Xiaochun, and therefore, he had been looking for an opportunity to give him a large sum of

merit points.

But without a good excuse, how could he stoop to helping a mere Core Formation cultivator? After all, he was the Sky Quarter peak lord, and although he wasn't a deva, he was half a step into that realm, and a hostage definitely wasn't someone he should care about.

And yet, here Bai Xiaochun had gone and rejected his offer.

The peak lord was starting to feel very frustrated. After all, the person he didn't dare to provoke, the one who had made the demands of him to begin with, was standing right next to him. It was none other than that young woman in the white robe!

"Cut the crap!" he said. "Considering my status, you think I'm just going to take things from you? Tell me what you want, and as long as it's in my power, I'll meet your demands!"

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one to gape in response to the words. The cold-faced female cultivator gasped; as of this day, her view of her Master had changed. Clearly, he wasn't trying to trade with Bai Xiaochun, he was simply handing things over to him....

"What powerful backer does this Bai Xiaochun have!?" she thought, looking at him with wide eyes, her heart pounding.

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun looked up toward the dazzling temple at the peak of the mountain, and suddenly felt a bit nervous. Something about the whole situation seemed odd, as if this peak lord wouldn't let him go without giving him something. In fact, it seemed like refusing the offer would enrage the man.

Even as he hesitated, the peak lord once again demanded that he hurry up and accept the offer.

Bai Xiaochun grit his teeth. Eyes sparkling, he looked up at the temple and said, "Peak Lord, disciple is extremely grateful for your kind intentions. If you truly wish to give me something, Senior, well... down in Sky City you have to rent everything. I really can

never feel at home. After coming here all alone, sir, I really wish I could have my own piece of land, something that belongs just to me. What do you think?

“When I find the right location, I’ll build myself a little mansion right on top of it....” With that, he looked up toward the mountain peak, anticipation written on his face.

Although he had been a bit hesitant to make the request, it was to his surprise that he saw a seven-colored beam of light immediately fly out from the temple and come to a stop right in front of him in the form of a little seven-colored flag.

“The east, south, and central districts are off limits. But go ahead and select any open land in the west or north districts. Plant that flag in the ground, and that 5-kilometer area will be your personal property!” With that, the Sky Quarter peak lord sighed in relief, then sent a wave of seven-colored light to push Bai Xiaochun and the cold-faced female cultivator away.

The female cultivator was completely taken aback, and couldn’t stop staring at the seven-colored flag in Bai Xiaochun’s hand. Even as the peak lord’s personal apprentice, she had never received such treatment, and she couldn’t prevent her eyes from shining brightly. How could she ever have imagined that her Master would give Bai Xiaochun the gift of personal property!?

In Sky City, a 5-kilometer-area of personal property was so expensive that it was impossible to even imagine, and yet her Master had handed it over without even pausing. From what the young woman could tell, Bai Xiaochun must have a very powerful backer indeed.

“He really gave it to me?” Bai Xiaochun thought with a gasp, clutching the seven-colored flag in his hand as he was pushed 300 meters away from the mountain. As he looked over his shoulder, he was fairly certain that he could see through the door of the seven-colored temple, where the vague image of a young woman

could be seen. It was impossible to tell exactly what she looked like, and even in the moment in which he saw her, she vanished.

With that, he turned and left, taking his suspicions with him. A moment later, the young woman who had just vanished materialized again, this time wearing a veil.

“Long time no see, Xiaochun....” she murmured. A moment later, a passing breeze lifted the veil for just a moment, revealing a spectacularly beautiful face.

Had Bai Xiaochun been there to see it, he would have recognized this young woman immediately. She looked very much like Du Lingfei!

Slowly, a smile spread out on her face, the type of smile that comes when reuniting with someone important, a smile filled with warmth and anticipation.

Chapter 396: Comeback Time!

Puzzlement and confusion could be seen in Bai Xiaochun's eyes the entire way out of the rainbow district. The cold female cultivator leading the way suddenly seemed much warmer than before, and even looked at him a few times out of the corner of her eye to size him up.

When they reached the teleportation portal, she smiled and gave him a curtsying bow.

“Brother Bai, sorry for my lack of manners earlier. Oh, my name is Qing Xuan.”

Then the light of teleportation rose up between them. Bai Xiaochun's vision swam, and the echo of the young woman's words was replaced by the cacophonous din of Sky City.

Bai Xiaochun felt almost like he had been dreaming just now. But then he pulled the seven-colored flag out of his bag of holding and looked it over, and his eyes began to shine brightly with excitement.

“I can't believe he actually gave it to me!” The idea of having his own five-kilometer area of personal property in Sky City was spine-tingling.

However, he didn't forget his suspicions about why exactly things had played out as they did. Looking back up in the direction of Sky Quarter Rainbow, he murmured to himself, “Somebody is secretly helping me.... The Sky Quarter peak lord was obviously being forced to give me a gift. Otherwise, why did he never actually take the pill formula!?!?” Lost in thought, he headed back toward the north district. However, his reverie didn't last long; soon he realized that everyone around him was talking about the Azure Dragon Society.

“Did you hear? After you consume that evil Fantasy Pill, it gives

you permanent brain damage! How sadistic!!”

“It doesn’t just give you brain damage. If you consume enough of them, your latent talent deteriorates, and you slowly go crazy! I even heard of some people who died from them!”

“There’s worse! They’re addictive. Once you start consuming them, you go crazy if you try to stop! I should have known the Azure Dragon Society would be responsible for a sadistic pill like that!”

“The boss of the Azure Dragon Society was the one who invented it! Hey, do you guys remember the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill? He made that too! What a depraved devil!!”

Bai Xiaochun was not very happy about such talk. Although his Fantasy Pill wasn’t perfect, it definitely wouldn’t cause any sort of permanent harm, and the positive aspects of the pill more than made up for any side effects.

Furthermore, nobody had ever died from consuming them.

However, the rumors were too perfectly crafted, and by the time Bai Xiaochun arrived at the north district, word had spread to the other districts as well.

Based on the animosity being voiced toward the Azure Dragon Society and Boss Azure Dragon, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but imagine what would happen if someone recognized him. All it would take would be for someone to shout out and identify him, and everyone around him would surely pounce on him.

He was trembling with fear, but in order to play it as safe as possible, he walked through the crowd cursing the Azure Dragon Society as loudly as possible. After hurrying along for some time, he finally arrived at the Azure Dragon Society’s headquarters.

Upon his return, everyone offered greetings, but clearly, they were very nervous. Seemingly on the verge of tears, Xu Baocai said, “Junior Patriarch, that shameless Celestial Sky Society has been

spreading rumors everywhere, slandering the Azure Dragon Society! A lot of our people have already renounced their membership!”

“The situation is completely out of control....” Master God-Diviner said, a bitter smile on his face. Despite the fact that they had been on guard for a counter attack, the Celestial Sky Society was too big of an organization, and had connections in the city that went far deeper than the Azure Dragon Society’s.

Big Fatty Zhang and Chen Manyao seemed very anxious, and the other Azure Dragon Society cultivators were all standing there in mute silence. Everyone was obviously waiting to hear what exactly had occurred during Bai Xiaochun’s trip to the rainbow district, and if anything positive had come of it.

If the result was indeed positive, then they would stick with the Azure Dragon Society and wait to see how things developed. If not, then they would have to start considering how they would survive after having offended the Celestial Sky Society.

Bai Xiaochun was very angry. After all, the Celestial Sky Society had been the group who had started selling the Fantasy Pills, and those versions had been crafted from stolen hallucination smoke. Now, they were going so far as to pin all the blame on Bai Xiaochun, which was a humiliation that left him fuming. Then he thought back to how he had been set up in the situation with the Ultra Fasting Aid Pill, and his anger reached the point where he almost couldn’t contain it.

Big Fatty Zhang eyes shone with vicious light as he said, “Ninth Fatty, the Celestial Sky Society has pushed things too far. Let’s go have it out with them once and for all!”

Clearly, his experiences recently had left him with a much sharper killing aura to him.

“Junior Patriarch,” Xu Baocai said. “I think we really do need to just go fight it out with them. But how are we supposed to do that

considering the sect rules...?”

“There’s nothing we can do!” Master God-Diviner jumped in. “With the Fantasy Pills outlawed, we have no way to make a living. What are we supposed to do?!” All the other cultivators simply stood to the side as the discussion progressed. Finally, one of the orange-robed disciples stepped forward, clasped hands and bowed to Bai Xiaochun.

“Boss, did anything good come of your trip to the rainbow district?” As soon as the words left his mouth, everyone quieted down and looked at Bai Xiaochun expectantly.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath to suppress his anger, then said, “Of course some good came of it. But we still can’t sell Fantasy Pills.”

The silence which met his words was even deeper than the silence from before.

After looking over the group, he asked for someone to bring him a map of Sky City, then turned and walked into his room

Time passed. The next day, more cultivators left the Azure Dragon Society. The day after that, even more left. That trend continued with each passing day.

By the time seven whole days had passed, the continued pressure from the Celestial Sky Society saw ninety percent of the cultivators leave the Azure Dragon Society. The Azure Dragon Society had risen with explosive speed, and although such people had been happy to join it at the peak of its success, none of them had any desire to stay with it as it declined.

The group’s subsidiary organizations in the other districts of the city collapsed, and the smaller clans and gangs that had joined them abandoned them and cut all ties.

All sorts of rumors swirled in the city, and the Celestial Sky Society took advantage of the situation to absorb as many former

members of the Azure Dragon Society as possible. Soon, the Azure Dragon Society's headquarters was almost completely empty.

There were now less than 1,000 cultivators remaining, and after two days passed, more left. By the ninth day, they had less than 200 members.

The majestic Azure Dragon Society had almost completely fallen in only nine days. The matter shook all of Sky City, and further reinforced the Celestial Sky Society's reputation of being powerful and having deep resources. In some ways, it was not a big surprise. Everything about the Azure Dragon Society had been based on their incredible income of merit points. Without time to truly settle down, they were like an empty building that could collapse when hit by a single big wave or a single gust of wind.

Only a bit more than 100 cultivators stayed behind, and they were either the original members, or very sentimental and loyal. This time around, Bai Xiaochun's Dao protectors didn't leave, not even Chen Manyao. They all sat around in the immortal's cave, waiting for Bai Xiaochun's door to open.

During the nine days which passed, Bai Xiaochun didn't rest. Instead, he carefully studied the map of Sky City, poring over every street and alley, studying each aspect in the most minute detail. It was the evening of the ninth day when he finally emerged.

His eyes were bloodshot, but he looked excited. Although he was a bit surprised that only a few people remained in the Azure Dragon Society, after a moment of thought, he threw his head back and laughed.

When the remaining members of the Azure Dragon Society saw him laughing, their hearts began to thump with hope.

Eyes shining with mysterious light, he took a deep breath and then said, "Alright, Fellow Daoists. Pack your bags. We're moving!"

“The Azure Dragon Society has fallen, but I’ve thought up a new name which will take us even farther than before!” Swishing his sleeve, he said nothing more. However, the rest of the cultivators’ moods were instantly lifted. Master God-Diviner was the first to start packing his bags, and before long, the entire group of more than 100 cultivators was walking out of the immortal’s cave!

Their destination was not in the north district, but rather, in the west district!

Quite a few cultivators noticed them as they made their way along, and when people realized that they were the Azure Dragon Society, they began to follow curiously. Everyone was wondering where the bedraggled remnants of the organization would go. There were even some people sent by the Celestial Sky Society to follow them.

Bai Xiaochun completely ignored them, and it was without the slightest pause that he headed to an area on the very edge of the west district. Shockingly, what existed there was a vast desert!

When people realized where he was heading, their jaws dropped in shock. After all, within that dessert was a ruined city where cultivators of Sky City would often go to carry out important missions!

Chapter 397: Live Forever Tavern

Not very far into the desert itself were the crumbled ruins of a temple, which was the entrance to a necropolis that stretched out under the surface of the city.

The necropolis was huge, almost half the size of Sky City itself. All sorts of rare beasts, immortal grasses, and spirit plants grew there. It was a source of abundant resources for cultivators.

The ruins of the necropolis were the only place where disciples could go on missions inside Sky City itself. In fact, many of sect missions required that disciples go there.

It was a special place, much safer than locations on the outside. Although it was indeed the ruins of an ancient necropolis, it had been put there by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect for the express purpose of allowing disciples to train.

There were some creatures and areas in the ruins that certain disciples couldn't easily handle alone, but they were few and far between. Furthermore, Sky City itself was considered to be inside of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and as such, many disciples preferred to come to this place to go on missions.

Because of that, it tended to be a very bustling place.

The land itself was extremely valuable, and no one in Sky City other than the Celestial Sky Society was powerful enough to set up shop there. Generally speaking, they let anyone inside, but when people came out, they were required to share thirty percent of whatever profits they had acquired inside. Either that, or they had to spend a significant amount of merit points to get a special command medallion from the Celestial Sky Society that let them go on their way with no questions asked.

Only the Celestial Sky Society, with their deva clan background, could do such a thing. Many people had thought of trying to take

similar advantage of the ruins, but the Celestial Sky Society wouldn't let them.

After all, the Celestial Sky Society had paid an enormous price for the right to take control of that location, and the profits they earned made up more than fifty percent of their total income.

With such enormous profit at stake, the Celestial Sky Society obviously viewed the place as being extremely important.

As Bai Xiaochun led his group of over a hundred people toward the desert, everyone was shocked, including the cultivators from the Celestial Sky Society.

“What’s wrong with this Azure Dragon Society? What do they think they’re going to do here?”

“Don’t tell me that they want to go into the necropolis ruins to go on some missions?”

“It doesn’t look like that’s what they’re doing....”

Outside of the ruins was a checkpoint manned by large numbers of Celestial Sky Society cultivators, and as soon as they saw Bai Xiaochun and his followers heading their way, serious expressions appeared on their faces, and they rose to their feet.

There was also quite a crowd of cultivators preparing to go into the ruins to go on missions. When they saw the big group approaching, curious expressions appeared on their faces.

Nobody said a word. As for the Azure Dragon Society cultivators Bai Xiaochun had brought with him, none of them really understood what was happening, not even Big Fatty Zhang and the other Dao protectors.

Finally, Xu Baocai couldn't hold back from asking, “Junior Patriarch, what are we doing here?”

“This is where we’re moving to!” Bai Xiaochun replied loudly, not even bothering to look back. Instead, he simply kept his eyes

fixed ahead as he walked forward, completely ignoring the Celestial Sky Society cultivators.

Those cultivators didn't dare to get in Bai Xiaochun's way. Not only was he a Gold Core cultivator, more importantly, the rules of the Celestial Sky Society stated that anyone could enter the ruins. It was only upon leaving that they had to pay the Celestial Sky Society their share of the loot.

Bai Xiaochun passed the Celestial Sky Society cultivators, and then stopped at a point roughly 3,000 meters from the ruins of the temple. After looking around for a moment, he seemed to be quite pleased.

"Alright," he announced "This is our new home!"

Master God-Diviner blinked a few times and then glanced around.

A blank look could be seen in Xu Baocai's eyes, and Big Fatty Zhang was staring mutely in shock. Even Chen Manyao's jaw had dropped.

If they had such a reaction, there was little need to even consider how the other cultivators from the Azure Dragon Society reacted. They simply exchanged blank, awkward stares.

When the Celestial Sky Society cultivators heard Bai Xiaochun's words, they immediately burst into loud laughter.

"Very amusing. They think they're going to live here or something? This whole area belongs to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, not any individual person."

"Just what does the Azure Dragon Society think they're going to do?"

They weren't the only ones who found it hard to hold back from laughing. The crowd which had followed along, as well as the cultivators who had gathered in preparation of entering the ruins, were all roaring with laughter.

“I know the Azure Dragon Society got castigated recently, but don’t tell me they’re all actually insane? Do they really think they can just settle down in this place?”

“Boss Azure Dragon is a Core Formation cultivator, but even he couldn’t have taken over this area during the height of his power. This place is the lifeblood of the Celestial Sky Society, and they’re backed by a deva clan. If Azure Dragon Society tries to settle down here, that clan will definitely put them in their place.”

As the mocking laughter surrounded them, Master God-Diviner’s face turned red, and Xu Baocai looked very awkward. Furthermore, the embarrassment and confusion in the eyes of the Azure Dragon Society cultivators grew deeper.

Big Fatty Zhang and Chen Manyao coughed dryly, and appeared to be hesitating about whether or not to say anything.

“Xiaochun–”

In that moment, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and waved his sleeve, sticking his arm out to reveal what was clasped in his hand: a small, seven-colored flag, shining with dazzling light!

Instantly, intense pressure weighed down on the area, and all the laughter ceased. As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked very pleased with himself as he cast the little flag straight down into the ground at his feet!

“Activate!” he roared. The instant the little flag pierced into the ground, heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling filled the air, a sound like the crashing of thunder!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Everything began to shake violently as a gale force wind spiraled out of the little flag, engulfing the entire area and causing even more intense pressure to weigh down!

The Dao protectors’ faces flickered, and they backed up, gasping. The Celestial Sky Society cultivators, the passersby, and the

cultivators hoping to go on missions all began to edge backward.

The pressure weighing down on them seemed like heavenly might, the source of which was the little flag that Bai Xiaochun had just stabbed down into the ground!

As the wind screamed and the lands shook, Bai Xiaochun's hair whipped about him, and the seven-colored light swept out, filling a 300-meter area around the flag.

However, things weren't over yet. The light continued to spread, and in the blink of an eye, had filled 1.5 kilometers. Then 2.5 kilometers! And finally, 5 kilometers!!

Seven-colored ripples filled that entire area, completely replacing the desert sands which had existed there before. Everything flickered with scintillating light, as well as silence, which was broken only by the gasps of the other cultivators in the area.

But then, before any of them could react, the land began to tremble again, and more intense rumbling sounds rose up as the seven-colored ripples slowly merged into the ground. As they vanished, an enormous sealing mark became visible!

An enormous, indelible sealing mark!!

Then, a powerful force of expulsion appeared, a force which no one in the area could possibly fight back against as it wrapped around them and removed them from the 5-kilometer area.

Everyone was completely flabbergasted....

“That was... that was the force of expulsion that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect spell formations create for personal property!!”

“That's impossible! How could that be a true force of expulsion? Heavens! Only people who have the approval of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's grand spell formation can have personal property with a spell formation like that!!”

“There aren't even ten locations in all of Sky City that are

personal property!!”

“I can’t believe Boss Azure Dragon can stake claim to personal property!!” The surrounding cultivators felt as if lightning were crashing around in their minds, giving rise to shouts of astonishment and disbelief. Even the people from the Azure Dragon Society, including the Dao protectors, were all struck mute with astonishment.

However, most mind-blowingly shocking of all was that the entrance to the necropolis ruins was located within that 5-kilometer area!

As the cries of shock rose up, Bai Xiaochun stood there with his hands clasped behind his back and his chin held high. Looking extremely pleased with himself, he said, “Ahem. I’ll be setting up a little inn right here, and I already thought of a name for it. It’s going to be called the Live Forever Tavern.

“Everyone, feel free to enter the necropolis just as before. However, since this place is my home, before entering, I request that you enjoy a cup of spirit tea. Once you do, you’re considered a friend!”

Then he cleared his throat, smiled broadly, and continued, “Don’t worry, a cup of spirit tea is very cheap. Furthermore, when it comes to the loot from inside the necropolis, I’ll charge much less than the Celestial Sky Society did. Only ten percent!”

The people from the Celestial Sky Society felt their hearts surging with shock. Control of the entrance to the ruins had just been viciously wrenched out of their hands!

As for all of the other cultivators, their eyes began to shine brightly. The Celestial Sky Society had charged thirty percent, so obviously, the Azure Dragon Society was doing everything they could to keep the masses happy.

Chapter 398: Mid Gold Core Stage!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun took the seven-colored flag given to him by the Sky Quarter peak lord and stabbed it into the ground in that desert, everything in the 5-kilometer area around it became his personal property. The matter instantly caused a major commotion within Sky City.

The news spread like wildfire, until everyone in the entire city was talking about the matter in tones of complete shock and disbelief.

“Personal property?! How... how is that even possible?!”

“There are less than ten places in all of Sky City that count as personal property, and they’re only given out as rewards for people who perform incredible meritorious service for Sky Quarter Rainbow!! The Azure Dragon Society obviously has some powerful backers!!”

“That’s what I said! Everyone was wondering why the Azure Dragon Society dared to challenge the Celestial Sky Society, and now we know! The Boss Azure Dragon is incredibly mysterious and unfathomable. It wouldn’t be surprising if he had a deva on his side!”

Even as word spread in the city, the news was brought to the leadership of the Celestial Sky Society, who reacted with looks of dumbfounded shock.

They had worked themselves to the bone fighting against the Azure Dragon Society both physically and in terms of wits. Now, Bai Xiaochun had unleashed a deadly counter strike. Just when he seemed to have been defeated without possibility of recovery, he turned everything around. The Celestial Sky Society simply couldn’t accept the situation.

“Personal property!?!?!?” Countless cries of shock filled the

Celestial Sky Society, and many members were filled with bitterness and hesitation.

In the briefest of moments, everyone's opinions of the Azure Dragon Society had completely changed. After all, they now controlled the only entrance into the necropolis ruins.

As for everyone who had recently abandoned the Azure Dragon Society, their hearts swelled with regret, and yet, there was nothing they could do about the situation. The Azure Dragon Society wasn't recruiting anymore, and rejected any people who took the initiative to apply for membership.

It didn't take long before, there in the desert in the west district of the city, right next to the entrance to the necropolis ruins, a tavern was erected by the over 100 members of the Azure Dragon Society.

It was a huge tavern consisting of multiple structures, and even had outdoor seating under numerous tented pavilions. The more than 100 members of the Azure Dragon Society became waiters who specialized in selling spirit tea.

People who wanted to enter the necropolis ruins couldn't do so with a Celestial Sky Society command medallion. Instead, they had to buy a cup of tea.

It only took a few days to build the tavern, and then it was open for business. Of course, Sky City was a subsidiary of Sky Quarter Rainbow, and yet not a single peep had been heard from there regarding the matter. Apparently, no one up on the rainbow cared about what was happening, and that in and of itself was extremely telling. It also fueled even more speculation regarding the mysterious background of Boss Azure Dragon.

Time passed, and the Celestial Sky Society was forced to simply deal with the situation. Soon, the number of people entering the ruins returned to its normal rate, and before long, the fact that the Azure Dragon Society was only collecting ten percent of the profits

from inside ensured that more and more cultivators chose that location to go on missions. Eventually, more than 100,000 disciples were entering the ruins on a daily basis.

Considering the volume of customers, it was little wonder that the Azure Dragon Society was very busy. Soon, the outdoor pavilion seating couldn't accommodate the crowds, and they had to erect even more pavilions.

In terms of the merit point profit, when Bai Xiaochun checked into it, he gasped. They were earning so much more profit than when they had been selling Fantasy Pills that it was simply terrifying.

"The Celestial Sky Society must be filthy rich!!" he said, swallowing hard. Next to him, Big Fatty Zhang looked at the merit point reports, his eyes shining as he likewise denounced the Celestial Sky Society.

No one personally kept the merit point profits. They were collected in a command medallion belonging to the organization as a whole. That way, the millions of merit points wouldn't accidentally force anyone to rise to the position of a yellow-robed disciple if they didn't want to.

In fact, Bai Xiaochun was actually very worried that he one day might accidentally get himself promoted to yellow-robed disciple. If that happened, he would probably cry himself to death. Therefore, he was very careful never to have more than a few hundred thousand merit points on his person at any given time. Most of the merit points were stored in the Azure Dragon Society's joint command medallion.

A few days passed, and the tavern continued to explode in popularity. As for the Celestial Sky Society, their income dwindled. They had lost the Fantasy Pills, and they had lost their control of the ruins. After much debate, they finally sent people to try to work out a deal with the Azure Dragon Society.

Bai Xiaochun had Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai handle the negotiations. Naturally, the Azure Dragon Society didn't agree to any compromises, and eventually just drove the Celestial Sky Society cultivators away.

Bai Xiaochun felt very, very pleased with himself. By now, Sky City truly felt like home, and his share of the merit point profits was very satisfactory.

"Ah, now this is life," he thought, standing on a balcony in the tavern, looking down at all the hustle and bustle.

Even more pleasing to Bai Xiaochun was that because of his recent cultivation progress, he had reached the point of an imminent breakthrough. From what he could tell, it would only be a few days before he reached the mid Gold Core stage.

Therefore, he set aside external matters and went into secluded meditation in a secret room in the tavern, hoping to achieve that breakthrough as quickly as possible.

That session of secluded meditation lasted for a month.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun's eyes snapped open, and a bright blue light could be seen in his pupils. At the same time, intense streams of frigid qi were roiling off of him.

The frigid qi soon filled the entire area, causing the temperature in the chamber to drop rapidly. Cracking sounds could be heard as ice began to cover the walls, ceiling, and roof.

"Frigid Acolytes can form frigid shadows and unleash the magic of frigid coldness. As for Frigid Adepts, they can freeze everything in a 3,000-meter area!" With that, he waved his hand.

Instantly, his hand turned as clear as crystal, making it possible to see the blood flowing through the veins beneath his skin. Apparently, the cold in the chamber didn't affect him at all.

"Time to break through," he said. Rising to his feet, he sped out of the secret chamber, and before anyone could detect his passage,

was gone from the tavern.

He became a beam of light, shooting through the air to appear in a location deep in the desert. It was a remote area with no signs of life whatsoever, and definitely no cultivators from Sky City. Few people would ever come to a distant place like this.

It was a place that blistered with intense heat; despite being so close to the Heavenspan River and the Heavenspan Sea, this was still a desert, and the temperature was so high that it distorted the air, making it difficult to see anything clearly.

As Bai Xiaochun stood there, the blue light in his eyes grew more intense. After looking around to confirm that there really was no one present, he suddenly closed his eyes, whereupon a blast of intense frigid qi spread out to fill the 300-meter-area around him. Instantly, the blazing heat of the desert was completely neutralized, and the ground even froze up!

In fact, because of the sudden juxtaposition of hot and cold, thunderous rumbling sounds filled the air. However, things weren't over yet. Bai Xiaochun rotated his cultivation base, and as the power of the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation erupted, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing the 300-meter-area of coldness to expand rapidly

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

600 meters. 900 meters.... 1,500 meters!

And yet, the process was not over! Bai Xiaochun's hair whipped around him, and although his eyes were closed, it couldn't stop the blue light from spilling past his eyelids and spreading out in all directions. Both of his hands were as translucent as crystal, making it seem almost as if he were made of ice!

The area of frigid qi soon reached 2,100 meters, and the cracking sounds continued as the heat of the desert was driven away. Frigid qi erupted, spreading out to 2,700 meters!

2,760 meters. 2,850 meters. 2,940 meters. Within the space of a few breaths of time, the frigid qi had filled an area of 2,997 meters!

There were only three meters left!

Three meters to the Frigid Adept level!

“Frigid Adept!” Bai Xiaochun roared as his eyes snapped open. Intense rumbling sounds echoed out from his cultivation base as the frigid qi in his Heaven-Dao Gold Core continued to expand.

In that moment, the area covered by his frigid qi reached 3,000 meters!! The intense coldness within that area was such that the ground was completely iced over, turning the area into a world of freezing ice!

In that moment, Bai Xiaochun’s Heaven-Dao Gold Core broke through from the early stage to the mid Gold Core stage! Simultaneously, a Heaven-Dao aura spread out in all directions.

Outside of that 3,000-meter-area, the desert was just as hot as ever. However, because of the presence of the intense cold right next to it, even the air began to shatter. It was a completely and utterly shocking sight.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes overflowed with excitement, and then flickered, causing numerous illusory projections to appear within the 3,000-meter-area, all of which looked exactly like Bai Xiaochun. These were none other than his frigid shadows!

Suddenly, he switched places with one of them. There was no speed involved, because it was just like a teleportation. If anyone had been there to see so many versions of Bai Xiaochun, they would definitely have gasped in shock.

Moments later, the numerous frigid shadows converged, revealing Bai Xiaochun’s true form. Waving his sleeve, he dispelled the area of coldness, allowing the heat to sweep back in. The resulting tempest sent his hair whipping about as he threw his head back and laughed heartily.

Chapter 399: Song Que's Dream...

If anyone had been there to see what was happening, they would have been deeply shaken. This was something that could not be accomplished by ordinary mid Core Formation cultivators, or even the top Chosen of the generation!

Furthermore, this was the riversource Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, whose Chosen vastly surpassed those in the Lower or Middle Reaches. And yet, what Bai Xiaochun was currently doing would shock all such Chosen.

And the might of the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation was only just revealing its potential!

“This... this is only the Frigid Adept level. When I reach the Frigid Master level....” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone with anticipation as he thought back to the description of the technique.

“Frigid Masters can create a 30,000-meter frigid domain with actual clones! These are just frigid shadows, not true clones!” At this point, he couldn’t help but think about the Frigid Paragon level!

“Frigid Paragons can even freeze portions of the Heavenspan River!” Bai Xiaochun’s hands were clenched into fists, and the anticipation in his eyes shone strong and bright. However, this session of cultivation was not yet over, and his breakthrough wasn’t going to be limited to the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. The time had come for his Undying Muscles!

Next, he looked down at his left leg, the muscles of which had by now been refined to completion, making his leg the strongest part of his entire body by far, and also the most resilient.

Eyes glittering, he lifted his left foot up and then stomped it back down toward the ground, fueling the motion with all the power of his Undying Muscles. Even before the foot actually made contact,

the ground began to quake, sending countless volumes of sand flying up into the air.

And yet, Bai Xiaochun wasn't satisfied. In the moment that his foot made contact with the ground, his eyes flashed, and he said, "Undying Hex!"

Countless crevices snaked out in all directions, creating something like a natural restrictive spell. In that instant, everything in the area was simultaneously sealed in place and then destroyed. The area around Bai Xiaochun began to collapse, sending massive amounts of dust flying up into the air.

Sounds like muffled thunder echoed out in all directions, reaching even the inhabited parts of Sky City.

Bai Xiaochun let out a yelp as tumbled downward through the flying dust and sand. Then, moments later, as the dust settled, he could be seen at the bottom of an enormous, 300-meter-wide crater!

Covering the crater were countless interlocking golden threads, which were none other than the manifestation of the divine ability which came after the Throat Crushing Grasp and the Mountain Shaking Bash, the Undying Hex!

It could seal anything and everything!

At the bottom of the crater, the dust-covered Bai Xiaochun was struggling back to his feet, not sure whether to laugh or cry. He had forgotten that he was in a desert, and that there was only loose sand and dirt beneath his feet. To suddenly tumble down and end up covered in dirt right in the moment of triumph was definitely a loss of face, but after climbing out of the crater and confirming that no one was in the area to see him, he breathed a sigh of relief. Then he composed himself for a moment before transforming into a beam of light that shot back in the direction of the tavern.

Moments after he left, cultivators from Sky City arrived to see

what had caused the commotion. When they caught sight of the 300-meter-wide crater, all of them gasped in shock.

“This... this desert was put here by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, wasn’t it?!?!”

“No ordinary force could cause this kind of damage here. I can’t believe someone actually managed to create a crater like this. Could it be that one of the famous Chosen in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars came down here to do some training?”

“Not even Core Formation cultivators could do something like that. It must have been somebody from the top 1,000 in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!” When the subject of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars came up, looks of envy could be seen on the faces of all the cultivators present.

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars were very important in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect; they were an elite group of cultivators under the Nascent Soul stage who were ranked according to power and ability. Anyone on that list could single-handedly shake the eastern cultivation world.

Even as the discussion about the matter unfolded, a beam of light appeared off in the distance, within which was a handsome young man. He seemed weary and travel-worn, but his eyes shone brightly, and astonishingly, his cultivation base was a step beyond the great circle of Foundation Establishment; he was in the quasi-Core stage!

A mere glance at him would confirm that by merely crystallizing his spiritual seas, he would step into Core Formation. Although there was always a possibility of failure, considering the fluctuations that rolled off of him, that didn’t seem likely in his case.

There was also a murderous aura surrounding the young man which, when coupled with the scars on his face, made him seem somewhat unapproachable.

He was none other than Song Que!

Back when he had parted ways with Bai Xiaochun, he had immediately gone outside the sect to start working on missions. Lots of them. Nearly a year had passed, and he had faced many potentially fatal situations. However, he had gone all out to complete most of his missions, and had only a few more to go, all of them inside of the necropolis ruins. After accomplishing those missions, he would have a savings of tens of thousands of merit points.

As he passed through the area, he noticed the crater, and couldn't help but stop to take a look.

“Whoever made this crater must be completely extraordinary.... one of these days, I'm going to be just as incredible!”

The other cultivators looked at him warily. After all, the dangerous gleam in his eye, his murderous aura, and his generally sinister air made him seem like the type of person no one would dare to provoke. He seemed like the person who lived a life surrounded by death.

When Song Que noticed the looks of fear in their eyes, he was secretly pleased, and even a bit proud. He felt as if he had become a new person in the last year or so, and had become much more powerful. From what he could tell, he was just around the corner from becoming a yellow-robed disciple.

“I wouldn't be surprised if those other losers had starved to death by now. Hmph!” In his arrogance, he couldn't help but muse that Master God-Diviner, Xu Baocai, and Big Fatty Zhang were all completely useless. Only Chen Manyao had a bit of potential.

Of course, the mere thought of Bai Xiaochun caused Song Que to grind his teeth. Bai Xiaochun had crushed him for the first time in the Fallen Sword Abyss, stealing his chance to reach Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, and that was a source of constant angst, something he would never forget for the rest of his life. And

then there were all the things which had occurred in the Blood Stream Sect, which had nearly driven him crazy. Even how things had played out in the River-Defying Sect were almost beyond bearable.

“Bai Xiaochun, you made a fool of me in the Fallen Sword Abyss, twice as badly in the Blood Stream Sect, and three times as badly in the River-Defying Sect. You just never shut up about Que’er this and Que’er that. You just wait until I become a yellow-robed disciple, then I’ll make a fool of you ten times worse than you ever did to me!!” As he spoke, his eyes began to shine even more brightly than before.

He was completely and utterly confident that he could do exactly as he had planned.

“The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is a land of good fortune for me. Before coming here, the clan patriarch told me he had full confidence that I would become a Nascent Soul cultivator here!!” Looking down, he tapped his bag of holding to produce a blue command medallion.

It wasn’t large, but it was very significant. Earlier, when he was outside the sect on a mission, he had run into another cultivator from Sky City who had sold it to him for a hefty sum. It was none other than a command medallion which could be used to enter the necropolis ruins run by the Celestial Sky Society.

“Whether or not I get enough merit points to become a yellow-robed disciple will depend on how things go in these ruins. Hopefully, I’ll come out with enough to get my promotion, and then I can ascend to the rainbow district!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, his eyes began to burn with passion and anticipation.

“First, I’ll go scout out the ruins a bit. Then I’ll go make some special preparations to finish the missions.” Smiling, he shot off in the direction of the necropolis entrance.

Before long, he was closing in on the location, which was when he caught sight of a rather large tavern that had been erected around it.

He also saw the outside seating area with the tented pavilions, and cultivators bustling about wearing white garments that make them look like waiters.

A lot of other ordinary disciples could also be seen going into and coming out of the ruins.

“Well, they certainly deserve to be known as the top organization in Sky City. Only the Celestial Sky Society with their deva clan backers could build a tavern like this.” He sighed, eyes gleaming with envy when he thought about how much income the Celestial Sky Society must be making by controlling the area. Sadly, there was nothing he could do about that.

“I bet they make more in a day than I could save up in a year....”

He had spent the entire past year outside the sect working on missions, and thus had no idea about what had gone on in the city during that time. Sighing with envy, he produced his Celestial Sky Society medallion and headed toward the tavern.

Chapter 400: Que'er, It's You!

The ruins of the temple were very different from the rest of the desert. Right in the middle of them, a huge door could be seen, which was the entrance that led into the necropolis.

Next to the ruins and the door was the Azure Dragon Society's tavern, and the bustling pavilions filled with countless cultivators.

Some of them were calculating their earnings from inside the necropolis, others were finishing their cups of spirit tea before heading inside. The rules were actually a bit different from when the Celestial Sky Society ran the area. Although the Azure Dragon Society only collected ten percent of the profits, they also required that anyone entering the necropolis purchase a 10-merit-point cup of spirit tea first.

Even with that new rule, they were being much kinder than the Celestial Sky Society, leaving the cultivators of Sky City very pleased. Of course, nothing could cause them to forget that they were on private property, which was threatening in and of itself.

Furthermore, many frightening rumors had spread regarding Boss Azure Dragon, and nobody dared to do anything to offend him.

As the hustle and bustle continued in the pavilions, Song Que approached with a cold expression on his face and his murderous aura roiling. That was how he had grown used to carrying himself outside the sect; generally speaking, it made it much easier to handle matters when he looked intimidating.

Song Que had no plans whatsoever to enter one of the pavilions, and instead headed straight toward the ruins with the intention of doing some scouting. However, one of the young Azure Dragon Society cultivators noticed that he was planning to bypass the pavilions, and quickly hurried over.

Clasping hands and smiling, he politely said, “Hello, Fellow Daoist, I’d like to invite you to come over and buy a cup of spirit tea.”

The courteous way that the Azure Dragon Society cultivators treated customers was a result of the rules put in place by Chen Manyao.

After all, their being here was already a subject of envy, and despite having reduced prices, they still needed to treat customers courteously. At the same time, if anyone came along who didn’t show them courtesy in return, the Azure Dragon Society would make sure they came to know that troublemakers weren’t welcome!

“Spirit tea?” Song Que said, surprised. “I’m not buying any spirit tea!” Although he wasn’t pleased, when he thought about how powerful the Celestial Sky Society was in the city, he suppressed his irritation and flashed the command medallion. “See that? I have a command medallion!”

His tone of voice instantly attracted the attention of some of the other cultivators in the area, who looked over with strange expressions on their faces.

The young man from the Azure Dragon Society didn’t seem to be offended, and the smile never left his face. After taking over the location, the Azure Dragon Society had encountered other people like this who didn’t know about the change in arrangements. Clasping hands again, the young man offered a kind explanation.

“I’m very sorry, Fellow Daoist, but your command medallion is from the Celestial Sky Society, and they don’t operate in this location anymore. We’re the Azure Dragon Society, and things work differently under our control.” With that, the young man patiently explained the rules, and as he did, Song Que’s expression changed multiple times.

He had spent a lot on that command medallion, all for the

purpose of avoiding the thirty percent fee charged by the Celestial Sky Society. Now that he was being told that the command medallion was useless, Song Que was nothing less than flabbergasted.

“How is this even possible?” Song Que said. “The Celestial Sky Society is so powerful, you people....” Song Que was starting to get anxious. If it was really true that the command medallion was useless, that would be a big blow to his plan to be promoted to a yellow-robed disciple.

By this point, Song Que’s murderous aura was pulsing dangerously; he already had a short temper to begin with, and in his anxiety, his wording began to turn sharp. “You people can’t do this! This command medallion was extremely expensive!!”

The cultivators in the area began to edge away, clearly amused by the scene which was playing out. There were even some cultivators in the crowd who secretly worked for the Celestial Sky Society, and joined in to fan the flames.

“The Azure Dragon Society had better explain this!”

“Yeah, that’s right! I bought the same kind of command medallion for a pretty penny! Don’t tell me it’s completely useless now!”

The expression on the face of the young man from the Azure Dragon Society suddenly turned grim. Snorting coldly, he said, “Get the hell out of here! If you cause any more trouble, don’t blame the Azure Dragon Society for being impolite!”

Song Que had just faced a year of deadly danger, and his killing intent could erupt at the slightest provocation. Eyes flashing with cold light, he unleashed the power of his quasi-Core cultivation base, causing a powerful wind to rush through the area as he took a step forward.

The young man from the Azure Dragon Society looked shocked,

and cries of astonishment rose up in the area. From the look of things, a huge commotion was about to break out. However, in that very moment, someone spoke in a quizzical voice.

“Song Que?” Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai had just been passing by, and when they looked over to see Song Que, their jaws dropped.

Song Que had been bristling with a murderous aura, but when he caught sight of Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai, it changed to an expression of astonishment. That was especially the case because of the healthy glow they had, and the way all of the Azure Dragon Society cultivators in the area looked at them with expressions of reverent respect.

“You two....” Something seemed off to Song Que, but before he could react any further, Bai Xiaochun, who had heard the commotion and taken the time to straighten up his robes before stepping out, scanned the area with divine sense. Upon seeing Song Que, he blinked a few times, and then smiled broadly and rushed out.

As he appeared in the open, the numerous Azure Dragon Society cultivators looked at him with expressions of reverence as they dropped to their knees to kowtow.

“Greetings, Boss!”

The reaction of the Azure Dragon Society cultivators caused a stir in the crowd. When people looked over and saw Bai Xiaochun, they gasped and rushed to clasp hands and bow their heads.

“Greetings, Boss Azure Dragon!”

It only took a few moments for everyone in all of the pavilions to join in. As for Song Que, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, dumbfounded, his mind spinning and his eyes completely blank.

“Que’er!” Bai Xiaochun cried, a loving expression on his face as he hurried over. “You finally showed up! How did you get yourself

in such a bad situation, Que'er? I mean, I thought I had it bad, but obviously, you have it way worse than me."

When people heard Bai Xiaochun's words, more gasps could be heard, and then people looked over at Song Que with envious looks. Considering that the boss of the Azure Dragon Society was addressing this cultivator as Que'er, it confirmed that the two of them had a very close relationship.

Clearly, this Que'er was a generation below Boss Azure Dragon when it came to family ranking.

Song Que's face was as white as a sheet, and his mind was being battered by tsunamis of astonishment. He suddenly felt like the entire world had been turned upside down. Here Bai Xiaochun was, glittering with the light of magical treasures, numerous jade pendants hanging all over him. Even at a glance, it was obvious that he must be wearing more than 1,000,000 merit points' worth of ornamentation.

In addition to that, he was flanked by more than a dozen puppet maidservants, each of whom had a leashed spirit creature with it. Their combined value had to be in the millions of merit points.

Song Que had spent an entire bitter year eating frugally and risking his life to reach the threshold of being a yellow-robed disciple. Now, he felt like he was about to fall to pieces mentally.

"Y-you're... you're Boss Azure Dragon?" he stammered. He felt like his vision was swimming, as if the sheer incredulity of the situation was more than he could process.

As that happened, Big Fatty Zhang and Chen Manyao approached. Song Que tore his vision from Bai Xiaochun to look at them, and when he saw the finery they wore, he suddenly got a very bad feeling.

"You guys...."

Xu Baocai cleared his throat and looked at Song Que with an

expression of pity and compassion.

“Song Que, we own this place. The junior patriarch built the Azure Dragon Society into what it is today, and this tavern belongs to us. This whole area is the personal property of the junior patriarch. Your command medallion really doesn’t do any good here. But considering that you’re the junior patriarch’s nephew, then we’re all on the same team, right? Who cares about command medallions! Just toss that thing in the trash. You can go into the necropolis any time you wish. Right, Junior Patriarch?”

Bai Xiaochun wore a very somber expression as he patted Song Que’s shoulder. Looking very much like someone in the elder generation, he nodded his head.

“Que’er, your aunt entrusted your safety to me. As your Senior, it’s my responsibility to care for you. Despite how you callously abandoned me when we first got here, you’re my nephew, so I can cut you some slack. Listen. Those ruins are quite dangerous, and as your uncle, I really can’t see you facing such peril. How many merit points do you need? I’ll make up the difference, and you can become a yellow-robed disciple immediately. All it will take is a single word on my part.”

In response to his words, countless gasps could be heard in the area, and many covetous gazes fell upon Song Que. Most people could only dream of becoming a yellow-robed disciple, and yet they had all personally heard Bai Xiaochun say that he could give that honor as a gift to Song Que. The envy in their eyes couldn’t have been more obvious.

However, Song Que was a proud person, so to hear terms such as ‘uncle’ and ‘Que’er’ caused his anger to spike to the heavens. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and then, unable to control himself, he passed out flat on his face.

Chapter 401: Incredible Gall!

Song Que opened his eyes later that night to find himself lying in one of the rooms of the tavern. After looking around blankly for a moment, he realized that the events which had occurred earlier in the day were no hallucination. On the one hand, he almost felt like crying, but on the other hand, his rage burned hot.

“How could this be happening...? I... I worked myself to the bone for an entire year. I skimped on food and clothing! I risked my life....

“And Bai Xiaochun.... Why? Why?! WHY?!?!” By now, tears really were threatening to well up in Song Que’s eyes. As he thought back over his life, he realized that it had consisted of two main segments.

The first part of his life had been flush with success. He had been a Chosen of the Blood Stream Sect, with unlimited prospects for the future. However, that part of his life had ended when he had met Bai Xiaochun, and then the second part began, a life of humiliation and suffering.

“I wasn’t his equal in the Fallen Sword Abyss, in the Blood Stream Sect, or in the River-Defying Sect. And now the same thing is happening here in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. I... I don’t match up to him in any way!!” Enraged, Song Que decided that he simply didn’t have the face to stick around. Gritting his teeth, he walked out of the room and flew up into the air to leave.

But then, with no warning whatsoever, a beam of light exploded out from Sky Quarter Rainbow and shot down toward him. Stunned, he quickly checked his merit points, and then his eyes widened.

Sure enough, he had more than 2,000,000 merit points, which was far more than the required amount to become a yellow-robed disciple. In fact, it was enough that he didn’t need to personally go

hand them in; the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's spell formation would automatically promote him to the rainbow district.

Those were the rules in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

As the light descended, all of the cultivators in Sky City could see it, and it caused their eyes to shine with envy and hope. As for Song Que, mixed emotions could be seen on his face as he looked back down at the tavern below. Even he wasn't sure exactly what he was thinking.

He was the first among the River-Defying Sect group to become a yellow-robed disciple, and the first to be promoted to the rainbow district. However, in the end, he was actually the biggest loser.

Even as he stewed in his thoughts, Bai Xiaochun emerged and looked up at him. Clearing his throat, he gave a farewell wave of his hand.

"Focus on your cultivation when you get up there. Don't lose face for your aunt and me! If you run into any problems, or if anyone bullies you, make sure to tell me. As your uncle, I'm family! Make sure to stay in touch...."

Song Que's mixed emotions got even more complicated upon hearing that. Glaring at Bai Xiaochun, he sighed as the beam of light surrounded him, and he vanished in the direction of the Sky Quarter Rainbow. After he left, the only thing that remained behind was a seven-colored glow that caused all onlookers' hearts to surge with the desire to experience the same thing themselves.

Having seen Song Que off, Bai Xiaochun returned to his room feeling wonderful about himself for his good deeds. He could only imagine the look on Song Junwan's face after he returned and told her how he'd cared for her nephew.

"Que'er sure is lucky to have an uncle like me!" Feeling very much like a magnanimous member of the Senior generation, he sat down cross-legged to work on his Frigid School Will-Evolving

Incantation.

Now that he was in the Frigid Adept level, his cultivation speed had increased, which led to a greater energy drainage. As such, he had to eat a shocking amount of spirit food every day.

Since he had plenty of food to replenish his energy, he decided that in terms of his Undying Muscles, it was time to move on to his head. Bai Xiaochun felt that the fist was the most obvious weapon to use in combat, and at the moment, the speed and power of his left leg was already sufficient for use in a fight. As for what an opponent would be least on guard against, the head seemed the best choice.

The thought of suddenly headbutting someone in the middle of a fight got him very excited, so it was with great enthusiasm that he set about refining the muscles in his head.

Business in the tavern had stabilized, and fewer incidents occurred. The Azure Dragon Society's profits had also evened out, and they were starting to build up some savings. By now, they were something of a unique organization within Sky City.

They were very famous and powerful, and were essentially on equal footing with the Celestial Sky Society. They had far surpassed the old version of the Azure Dragon Society.

However, as it became clear that the Live Forever Tavern was going to be a part of Sky City for a long time, the leaders in the Celestial Sky Society felt like they were going crazy. Sadly for them, the tavern was built on private property, and none of their plans to deal with the situation had any effect.

Even if they tried to physically fight it out with Bai Xiaochun, they would lose, and besides, that would be a violation of sect rules. The only thing they could do was bring the matter to the attention of their superiors in the deva clan they were part of.

It had been a year since the Celestial Sky Society's income had

begun to decline, and at long last, the elder in the clan who managed outside affairs took note. After reading the latest report from the Celestial Sky Society, he snorted coldly and said, “Trifling orange-robed disciple! What tremendous gall! Bully people if you want, but how dare you steal things that belong to our clan!”

This particular elder was a Nascent Soul cultivator, and although he wasn’t one of the most important people in the clan, his words carried a lot of weight. After a bit of thought, he decided that it would be best not to do anything rashly, so he took out a jade slip to do a bit of research into why Bai Xiaochun had been given personal property.

“The Sky Quarter peak lord traded it to him for the formula for Fantasy Pills. Well, I don’t care if this Bai Xiaochun has some connections to the Sky Quarter peak lord, I’m going to go teach him a lesson anyway!” Flicking his sleeve, he was just about issue some orders to go beat up Bai Xiaochun and take back the land when, all of a sudden, a piercing sound rose up outside of his room.

Moments later, a violet jade slip flew through the spell formation protecting his room, then came to a stop right in front of him.

The Nascent Soul elder’s face fell when he looked at the jade slip and saw the character “Heaven” inscribed on it. Trembling, he reached out with both hands to respectfully accept the jade slip, then scanned it with divine sense. As he did, his eyes widened.

“What... what kind of backer does this Bai Xiaochun have...?” Violet light spilled out of the jade slip, and it vanished.

When the jade slip was gone, the Nascent Soul elder’s face returned to normal, although a bit of fear could still be seen lingering in his eyes. He immediately ceased any thoughts of issuing orders to the clan, and at the same time, felt his anger rising at the realization that he had almost done something which would have brought harm to the clan as a whole. Snorting coldly, he immediately sent people to bring the boss of the Celestial Sky

Society up to the rainbow for a meeting.

The boss of the Celestial Sky Society was a middle-aged man who, when he was told a Nascent Soul elder from the deva clan had summoned him, hurried over to the teleportation portal as quickly as possible. His initial assumption was that he would be given orders to go beat up Bai Xiaochun and take back the entrance to the necropolis. However, what he found was that the ashen-faced Nascent Soul elder had called him up to issue a tongue-lashing.

“I can’t believe you annoyed me with such a small matter as this. Why didn’t you just take care of it yourself!?!?”

The Nascent Soul elder was virtually yelling, causing the boss of the Celestial Sky Society to tremble with fear. After voicing numerous subservient words, he hurried away, almost on the verge of tears. Whenever he had to deal with Bai Xiaochun, it felt like no matter how much power he had on his side, he would always end up hitting his head against the wall.

“What did he mean small matter...? Boss Azure Dragon has personal property! I’m just a Core Formation cultivator! How can an outer clan member like me deal with something like that?” Sighing continuously at the unfairness of it all, he walked through the clan courtyard, musing that since the clan didn’t seem to care about the matter, he probably shouldn’t do anything to provoke Bai Xiaochun.

“Ah whatever. If this is how the clan wants things to be, then fine.” Just when he was about to teleport back to Sky City, he looked over and saw a young man in an extravagant yellow robe, walking along with a group of other cultivators.

This young man had a high place in the clan, and the arrogant expression on his face fit him perfectly because of it. The boss of the Celestial Sky Society instantly recognized him as a clan Chosen, Li Yuansheng, who had reached Core Formation in less than a hundred years. A few years ago, when he was still in

Foundation Establishment, he had come to Sky City to collect some merit points from the Celestial Sky Society, which was why the boss remembered him so clearly. The boss immediately clasped hands and called out a greeting as the group passed by.

Li Yuansheng stopped and looked over. Recalling their last meeting, he said, “What brings you here?”

The boss of the Celestial Sky Society felt his heart pounding with excitement. Immediately, he launched into a very vivid account of the frustrating matter of Boss Azure Dragon.

Li Yuansheng’s friends immediately began to make some teasing comments.

“Brother Li, does your clan really just let people steal their business!?”

“How amusing, the boss of the Azure Dragon Society is a mere core Formation cultivator, and yet he dares to steal from the tiger’s mouth?”

The boss of the Celestial Sky Society clasped hands and bowed deeply, then said, “Young Lord, could you please take charge of the situation?!”

Li Yuansheng’s eyes flickered, especially because of the words just spoken by the other cultivators. Snorting coldly, he said, “Well, I’m bored today anyway, so I might as well go check the situation out myself. I can’t believe this guy has such incredible gall!”

Chapter 402: Threatening Home!

The boss of the Celestial Sky Society was delighted, and immediately began to lead the way. As for the other cultivators with Li Yuansheng, they were all silkpants from various clans in the rainbow district. Because of how they had been showered with cultivation resources by their clans, their cultivation bases, despite being in the Core Formation stage, were extremely high.

Generally speaking, they had little to occupy their time, so seeing that something interesting was afoot, they all followed along with Li Yuansheng, laughing and chatting the entire time. One by one, they entered the teleportation portal, and were zipped down to Sky City.

The boss of the Celestial Sky Society was very excited, but he knew that when it came to silkpants like this, however quickly they got interested in something, that was also how quickly they would lose interest. Therefore, he wasted no time hurrying in the direction of the west district.

“Boss Azure Dragon Society is a complete villain!” he said. “He created that Ultra Fasting Aid Pill, which hurt a lot of fellow disciples!

“He was also the one who invented those Fantasy Pills, which were so bad the sect outlawed them. Given the extent of his vile deeds, it’s impossible to even guess how many people in Sky City hate him!

“Young Lord, you’re not just acting for the benefit of the clan, you’re wiping out an evil that threatens the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!”

Along the way, the Celestial Sky Society boss continued to spout all sorts of stories to Li Yuansheng and the other silkpants. They found it all very amusing, although they didn’t believe much of what they were being told.

“I can’t literally wipe him out,” Li Yuansheng said coolly. “If he has his own personal property, then he definitely has powerful backers. But considering he’s offended a deva clan, that won’t help him.” Although Li Yuansheng was a silkpants, he was also a Chosen from a deva clan, and despite his arrogant nature, was not the type to lose his head because of a bit of flattery and oily words. “Of course, after I handle the matter, you should know how to proceed going forward.”

With that, he gave a meaningful look to the Celestial Sky Society boss, who immediately understood what he was implying. Li Yuansheng wanted some merit points in compensation for his help! The Celestial Sky Society boss quickly nodded his head to indicate that he understood.

Li Yuansheng responded with a slight smile. As far as he was concerned, going to pick a fight with the Azure Dragon Society wasn’t a big deal, so he simply continued to laugh and chat with his friends as they headed toward the west district.

Along the way, quite a few Sky City cultivators noticed them, and many of them looked very shocked. With the exception of the boss of the Celestial Sky Society, everyone in the group was a yellow-robed disciple.

The sight of so many colorful yellow robes caused many hearts to tremble with astonishment and envy. Clearly, this was a group that had come down from the rainbow district.

It didn’t take long for some people to realize which direction these yellow-robed disciples were heading: the west district! As speculations rose about what they were planning to do, many people began to follow along cautiously.

Soon, a crowd of several hundred people was following them. Li Yuansheng didn’t pay them any attention; as a Chosen from a deva clan, and a yellow-robed disciple, he would receive a reception like this just about wherever he went in the eastern cultivation world.

The group didn't proceed along with any great haste. Eventually, they reached the desert, from which point they could just make out the ruins, and the enormous tavern next to it.

There were still quite a few cultivators coming and going, despite the fact that it was already evening. However, as soon as the cultivators in the area noticed Li Yuansheng and the other yellow-robed disciples, expressions of shock appeared on their faces.

“Yellow-robed disciples!”

“Look at how many of them there are! And look at that guy with them. Isn't that the boss of the Celestial Sky Society?!?!”

“It's no wonder. The Celestial Sky Society is backed by a deva clan, and now they've finally come to deal with the Azure Dragon Society!!”

Under the astonished gazes of everyone present, Li Yuansheng and his friends flew toward the tavern, unleashing their Core Formation cultivation bases with reckless abandon. Instantly, rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth, and a huge wind kicked up. Intense pressure weighed down on the area, causing all cultivators to tremble in place.

It was like layer upon layer of pressure descending from the heavens, like numerous mountains crushing down onto the shoulders of all the cultivators. As for the cultivators of the Azure Dragon Society inside the tavern, their faces fell, and they began to cry out in alarm.

Master God-Diviner rushed out into the open, his eyes shining with a strange light. Thanks to his enormous income of merit points, he had recently been able to surpass the great circle of Foundation Establishment, and was now in the quasi-Core stage.

Big Fatty Zhang also appeared. His progress in cultivation was the fastest among all of the Dao protectors. Perhaps it was because he had an affinity for the spiritual energy near the source of the

Heavenspan River, or perhaps it was because he was so skilled at spirit enhancement, but those things, coupled with the help of some merit points, helped him to break through into the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

Thus, he made quite the impressive figure as he rushed out to see what was happening. Xu Baocai and Chen Manyao also appeared, expressions flickering with uncertainty. When all of them saw a group of a dozen or so yellow-robed disciples in the air above, all of them radiating the pressure of Core Formation, they were completely taken aback.

The boss of the Celestial Sky Society looked extremely excited as he shouted, “Tell Boss Azure Dragon to get the hell out here this instant!”

Obviously, he hated the Azure Dragon Society down to his marrow, so being able to utter such words left him feeling very satisfied.

The group of several hundred onlookers who had come to watch the show couldn’t help but look on with wide eyes at what was happening.

“The Azure Dragon Society is finished....”

“The Celestial Sky Society is so powerful! They’re backed by a deva clan.... Even a single command from a deva clan is enough to send countless cultivators crazy with the desire to please them!”

“I’ve seen that guy before. He’s Li Yuansheng! Heavens! He’s a Chosen who ranks somewhere in the 900’s among the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!!” Such exclamations rang out loud and clear for all to hear.

Only the true superstars among Chosen could make it into the top 1,000 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. After all, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was a huge sect, so large that it would be difficult for any outsider to even calculate how many disciples

were in it.

As the crowd devolved into a hubbub, and as the boss of the Celestial Sky Society roared out his challenge, Bai Xiaochun opened the window a crack to see what was happening outside. When he saw the dozen or so cultivators hovering up above, he simply rolled his eyes. After all, this was his personal property, so there was nothing for him to worry about. Clearing his throat, he swaggered out into the open.

“Who’s causing all this racket!?” he said, standing on the balcony, frowning with disdain. “Leave, all of you!”

With that, he waved his sleeve, activating the spell formation power from the seven-colored flag. Instantly, violet winds spread out to drive the unwanted guests away. However, that was when Li Yuansheng smiled and suddenly produced a jade slip, which he pushed his finger down onto.

“Disperse formation!”

As soon as those two simple words left his mouth, the power of the spell formation vanished as if it had never existed. Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped as Li Yuansheng burst into motion, white flames erupting around him as he shot down like a meteor.

As he closed in, his mid Core Formation cultivation base erupted with power, becoming intense pressure. From a distance, it almost looked like the fires of the heavens had appeared right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

“Don’t make me say it again,” Li Yuansheng said coolly, his expression one of complete scorn and disdain. “Get the hell out here!”

The sight of such shocking flames caused Bai Xiaochun’s pupils to constrict. This person’s cultivation base was at the same level as his own: the mid Core Formation stage. Also, he was attacking with extraordinary power. In fact, he didn’t appear to be holding

anything back, indicating that he not only wished to seriously injure Bai Xiaochun, he wanted to destroy his tavern!

Master God-Diviner and the other Dao protectors all shouted out in alarm, but as for Bai Xiaochun, his anger spiked. This was his home, and for someone to show up like a bandit and try to wrest it away from him caused his fury to burn.

“You get the hell out!” he said, his right hand flashing with an incantation gesture. Instantly, the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation roiled out, sending shocking frigid qi spiraling out from his palm to freeze everything within a 3,000-meter area.

Li Yuansheng’s heavenly flame blasted into Bai Xiaochun’s right palm, and was deflected, causing it to rage out into the surrounding area. However, not only did it not affect any of the frozen buildings or structures of the tavern, the flames themselves were transformed into little frozen flower petals!

Li Yuansheng’s face fell as frigid coldness swept into him. Strangely, the frigid qi couldn’t be dispelled, but instead, became like countless tiny ice chunks, causing blood to instantly ooze out of the corners of his mouth and freeze into chunks.

However, his breathing wasn’t affected, so he barked, “The rest of you join forces and–”

However, before the complete sentence left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun looked up. Frigid qi swirled around him, completely eradicating the flames as he burst into motion, shooting toward Li Yuansheng.

Considering the incredible speed he was capable of, it only took a moment before he was right in front of Li Yuansheng, where he quickly performed an incantation gesture. In response, the frigid cold in the area swept toward Li Yuansheng, whose face fell as he let loose another attack. A moment later, a huge boom filled the area as all of his friends unleashed attacks, causing the air to collapse as a huge mouth formed and attempted to consume Bai

Xiaochun.

“Xiaochun!!” Big Fatty Zhang yelled. He wanted to help, but unfortunately, was incapable.

Unexpectedly, the instant the huge mouth seemed to be on the verge of swallowing up Bai Xiaochun, he vanished. When he reappeared, he was behind the group of a dozen or so Core Formation cultivators, his expression grim, his murderous aura raging in much the same way it had back when he was Nightcrypt!

A moment later, the Core Formation cultivators turned around, their faces masks of disbelief as they cried out in alarm.

“A minor teleportation? That’s impossible!!”

Chapter 403: How Dare You Try To Hurt Me!

It wasn't just the dozen or so Core Formation cultivators who were muttering exclamations of shock. The other cultivators in the area were also looking on with disbelieving expressions.

“There's no way that was a minor teleportation!!”

“Core Formation cultivators can't teleport!!”

“He must have some sort of precious treasure! Either that, or he's mastered some special technique....”

The commotion was no surprise. Only Nascent Soul Daoist masters could perform minor teleportations, which were considered to be divine abilities that resulted when one's consciousness began to merge with heaven and earth.

People under the Nascent Soul stage simply couldn't do that, not unless they possessed some unusual means of accomplishing it, but even that would indicate that such a person was not the type to be trifled with.

A person who could teleport in such a way would be impossible to surround in battle, and would almost always have the initiative. A mere thought on their part could allow them to attack or retreat at will.

The pupils of Li Yuansheng and his friends all constricted, and their hearts began to thump in their chests.

After Bai Xiaochun evaded the combined attack of the dozen or so Core Formation cultivators, the layer of ice which had built up on the surface of the tavern faded away, revealing that it hadn't been damaged at all.

To see Bai Xiaochun use a divine ability that could freeze a 3,000-meter area and then easily dispel the effect left the Azure Dragon

Society cultivators very excited. As for the crowd that made up the audience, they couldn't help but gasp.

Li Yuansheng and his friends were clearly shocked, but then their expressions turned serious; despite being silkpants, they were all disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, people who were experienced and knowledgeable. Before, they hadn't thought much of Bai Xiaochun at all, but now that they had actually tangled with him briefly, they viewed him in a completely different light.

Furthermore, from the murderous aura which surrounded him, they could tell that he was not just some ordinary cultivator. He obviously had a lot of experience fighting, even more than the type of cultivators who went out on missions for the sect.

Li Yuansheng's heart surged with anger, and he shot a glare at the boss of the Celestial Sky Society. As of this moment, he already regretted leaving the rainbow district, and he especially regretted bringing his friends with him. If he and his friends couldn't handle one opponent, then it wouldn't be long before they became the laughingstock of the sect.

The boss of the Celestial Sky Society couldn't stop trembling. He had known that Boss Azure Dragon was a Core Formation cultivator, but never could he possibly have imagined that he would be so vastly superior to other ordinary cultivators. Not only could he hold his own against a group of a dozen or so people in the same cultivation level as him, he had actually gained the advantage. He was the type of incredible cultivator who had access to some sort of teleportation magic.

"Um...." Even as the boss of the Celestial Sky Society began to pant in fear, Li Yuansheng's eyes turned icy cold, and he flickered into motion. In the blink of an eye, he became an enormous ball of flame that shot toward Bai Xiaochun. At the same time, his friends all unleashed various divine abilities, and the sky filled with multicolored light as a dozen Core Formation cultivators yet again joined forces to attack Bai Xiaochun.

“You people push things too far!” Bai Xiaochun said, his anger building. He took a step forward, causing frigid qi to explode out in all directions. He became the center of a whirling tempest that almost instantly slammed into his would-be attackers.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as Bai Xiaochun once again vanished, appearing a moment later behind one of his Core Formation opponents. Even as the man’s face fell, Bai Xiaochun clenched his right hand and unleashed a vicious fist strike.

More rumbling could be heard as the man’s clothing suddenly swirled through the air to defend against the fist strike. Trembling, the man tumbled backward, blood spraying out of his mouth as frigid qi poured into him. Instantly, the blood coming out of his mouth began to freeze up.

“So,” Bai Xiaochun thought with a frown, “his clothes can defend against a significant blow....”

Meanwhile, the injured Core Formation cultivator shouted frantically out in the hopes of warning his friends. “He has tremendous fleshly body pow–”

However, even as the words left his mouth, wings popped into being behind Bai Xiaochun, a flutter of which sent him rocketing forward at blinding speed to appear in front of the man yet again. This time, he reached out with lightning quickness and grabbed his opponent.

A moment later, a boom rang out, as well as a scream, as the Core Formation cultivator was flung into the ground. Numerous bones in his body were now broken as he lay there in a crater, looking up at Bai Xiaochun with fear written across his face.

Then, Bai Xiaochun used another teleportation to appear in front of a second opponent. This time, he didn’t use a fist, but instead, his left foot, which he spun through the air rapidly in a vicious kick.

A sonic boom echoed out, and the air distorted. At the same time, this second opponent's face fell as he drew upon all the strength he could to defend himself. However, the power and speed in Bai Xiaochun's left leg was backed by his Undying Muscles, and before his opponent could do anything, his foot landed on the man's lower back.

A pop rang out that sounded almost like an inflated paper bag bursting. The second cultivator's eyes went wide, and before he could even open his mouth to speak, blood sprayed out of it, and he was sent flying hundreds of meters off to the side. Shockingly, some of the vertebrae from the man's lower back had been shoved out of his skin and were even sticking out through his clothing! His screams could not have been any more agonized.

And yet, things weren't over yet. Golden strands exploded out around the cultivator, some sort of restrictive spell that sealed his cultivation base and made him seem like little more than a mortal.

Everyone who could see what had just occurred was left gasping.

"This Boss Azure Dragon is totally vicious!! Plus, he actually has the power to seal people with his attacks!!" The battle still wasn't over, though. Bai Xiaochun spun in place, unleashing all the power of his Undying Live Forever Technique to defend against the magical techniques that two Core Formation cultivators had just unleashed from behind him. Then, a vicious expression appeared on his face as he once again spun his left foot in a powerful kick. Instantly, the two cultivators who had just tried to attack him from behind were sent flying through the air, golden strands wrapping around them and sealing them. Both of them now had numerous broken bones to deal with, and one of them had been injured so badly in the leg that he was bleeding profusely.

Next, several huge violet cauldrons materialized and began to smash down toward Bai Xiaochun's opponents. As they did, he performed another minor teleportation, appearing next to a fifth cultivator.

However, by this time, the other cultivators were prepared, and instantly attacked with deadly force.

Bai Xiaochun snorted coldly and used the Mountain Shaking Bash to shoot forward like an explosive dragon to slam into a nearby cultivator. That cultivator instantly coughed up blood as he was sent tumbling backward, his chest caved in. Next, Bai Xiaochun turned in place and performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, waving at three incoming attackers.

“Frigid!” he murmured inwardly. Instantly, frigid qi billowed out, and cracking sounds could be heard as the air in front of him froze up. At the same time, the three incoming cultivators suddenly stopped in place.

Because of their faltering momentum, Bai Xiaochun sped forward and kicked out again with this left foot. Boom. Boom. Boom!

All three were sent spinning away, blood spraying out of their mouths.

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but from the moment Bai Xiaochun first made a move until this moment, only a few breaths’ worth of time had passed. The silkpants were routed one after another, until the only ones who remained standing were Li Yuansheng and three others.

Those three were trembling in shock. After looking around at their defeated comrades, they quickly began to back up, having no desire to participate in any more of Li Yuansheng’s affairs. The pitiable state of their friends was the most effective warning message that could possibly have been sent to them.

At the same time, the gasps of the onlookers grew into a strange silence. Apparently, they were so flabbergasted by Bai Xiaochun’s actions that they couldn’t even utter a sound.

Li Yuansheng was shaking visibly. For the space of a few breaths of time, all he could do was look around at his friends, who were

either unconscious or running away. Within moments, he was the only person left hovering there in midair. Bai Xiaochun's teleportation ability, and his shocking battle prowess, made him like a monster to people in the same cultivation level as him, someone virtually impossible to fight against!

Beads of sweat popped out on Li Yuansheng's forehead as he looked down at Bai Xiaochun with bloodshot eyes. Suddenly, a cold feeling rose up from the pit of Li Yuansheng's stomach, and he began to back up.

"Why don't you come on down from up there too?!" Bai Xiaochun, his eyes flickering with icy light.

Because of the frigid shadows in the area, and his incredible speed, he appeared as if by teleportation right in front of Li Yuansheng, who had been just on the verge of trying to flee. Then, he reached out with his right hand, drawing on the power of his Heavenly King Body in his attempt to grab Li Yuansheng.

A gravitational force appeared, and the frigid qi in the area transformed into countless needles of ice that instantly turned toward Li Yuansheng and began to speed in his direction. Li Yuansheng's face fell, and he shouted, "How dare you try to hurt me!! I'm Li Yuansheng, from a deva clan! I don't care who you have backing you, I'll see you expelled from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect within three days!!"

Chapter 404: I'm A Hostage!

Although the words uttered by Li Yuansheng were spoken in a moment of panic, they were clearly a powerful threat. As far as he was concerned, most cultivators who managed to make it into the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect would view being driven out of it as a fate worse than death.

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was the riversource sect in the eastern Heavenspan River. Anyone expelled from a sect like that would not be welcome in any other sect in the eastern cultivation world, be that in the Lower Reaches or the Middle Reaches. Any such person would have no choice but to become a rogue cultivator.

In the Heavenspan Realm, rogue cultivators occupied an extremely low position. They were not allowed to practice cultivation close to the Heavenspan River itself, and if they were caught secretly attempting to do so, they would immediately be driven away by the sects that controlled those areas.

Rogue cultivators who managed to reach the Nascent Soul stage had it a bit better off, but anyone beneath that level lived a very bitter existence.

And thus, Li Yuansheng did not hesitate to resort to such a threat. After all, according to the rules of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the fact that Boss Azure Dragon was a disciple of the sect meant that if Li Yuansheng wanted to see him dead, it would be either very, very difficult, or outright impossible. However, considering his position in the clan, having him expelled would be very easy.

Then, once he was on the outside, and no longer had the protection of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, killing him could be accomplished with little more than a thought!

Although he didn't actually know who Bai Xiaochun had backing

him, he didn't seem to care, nor did he care that this area was personal property. After all, on Sky Quarter Rainbow, any one of the hallmasters of the Ten Halls had the right to bestow personal property in Sky City. Although many in Sky City itself viewed personal property as something completely mindboggling, Li Yuansheng didn't think very much of it at all, considering that he came from a deva clan.

As soon as the words left Li Yuansheng's mouth, a tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes widened. Without any hesitation, he pulled his hand back, and at the same time, caused the countless shards of ice stabbing toward Li Yuansheng to vanish.

"What did you just say!?" he said, sounding somewhat nervous as he looked at Li Yuansheng.

This response caused all of the surrounding silkpants to stare in shock, as well as all of the other surrounding cultivators. Considering how shocked they had all been because of the fight which had just been playing out, this sudden reversal left them completely taken aback.

The abrupt change in Bai Xiaochun's actions seemed completely incomprehensible. Moments ago, he had been bursting with seemingly unstoppable momentum, but then, a mere threat uttered by Li Yuansheng seemed to make him weak in the knees.

Even Li Yuansheng was surprised, and in fact, his heart was still pounding in fear. He had uttered that threat in the heat of the moment, fearing he had no other options. Unexpectedly, it seemed to have worked, and as such, delight rose up in his heart, and the fierceness in his eyes grew more intense.

"Hmph. So, now you know what it means to be afraid, do you? Well it's too late. I don't care who you have backing you, in three days or less, you will no longer be a member of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and will have no choice other than to get the hell off

this land!” Li Yuansheng clasped his hands behind his back, sending his words echoing out and his energy surging. Overall, he seemed very mighty and impressive.

He could well imagine how, within a single breath of time, this Boss Azure Dragon would be stricken by profound panic. Either he would explode into a rage, or he would bitterly bow his head in acquiescence. Li Yuansheng very much wanted to know which of those two reactions he would see.

“That’s the difference between our statuses in the sect,” he thought. “Hmph! Let’s see whether or not this guy has what it takes to submit to fate.” As a cold, sinister smile spread out on Li Yuansheng’s face, the surrounding silkpants exchanged glances. The turn of events had been quite sudden, and it didn’t seem quite right that the vicious person from moments ago had suddenly become so nervous.

What happened next went beyond the powers of imagination or prediction of Li Yuansheng or anyone else present. As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard Li Yuansheng’s words, his face lit up with excitement, and even joy.

“Are you serious? Hahaha! Great! Wonderful! You’re Brother Li, right? Wow, I can’t believe I just offended you the way I did. Well, it wasn’t on purpose. Why didn’t you say earlier that you could get me out of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect within three days!? If you had spoken up in the beginning, I would never have moved a muscle against you and your friends!” At this point, though, he still seemed concerned about the situation. Seemingly hesitant, he continued, “Brother Li, let me just make sure I understood you correctly. We need to make things very clear. You said that you would get me out of the sect within three days, right?”

The silkpants in the area were completely flummoxed, and Li Yuansheng didn’t seem to know what to make of the situation. The people in the audience were exchanging awkward glances, completely unsure of what was going on, and unable to

comprehend why Bai Xiaochun seemed so excited.

“You....” Li Yuansheng suddenly felt lost, and began to wonder if he and this Boss Azure Dragon were even talking about the same thing. Finally, he couldn’t hold back from saying, “Did you hear what I just said? I told you that in three days or less, I would have you kicked the hell out of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! Kicked out, you hear? That means you won’t be a disciple here anymore! Driven away! Expelled!”

Bai Xiaochun nodded eagerly, and seemed to be in higher spirits than ever. “Yeah, as long as you’re sure you can pull it off, Brother Li. Wow, you truly are my greatest benefactor!”

With that, he turned toward Xu Baocai and the other Dao protectors.

“Xu Baocai!” he shouted. “Eldest Brother. Master Snortsnort! Hurry up and express your thanks to Fellow Daoist Li! He can get me out of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! I don’t have to be a hostage here anymore. We can all go home!”

Master God-Diviner, Xu Baocai, and Big Fatty Zhang all looked up sympathetically at Li Yuansheng.

As for Li Yuansheng, the blank look on his face changed as soon as he heard the word ‘hostage’. His eyes went as wide as if he had just seen a ghost. Pointing at Bai Xiaochun with a trembling finger, he said, “You’re a hostage?!”

“Yeah!” Bai Xiaochun said loudly, swishing his sleeve. “I’m an important political hostage!”

Most other hostages would be very embarrassed or even angry to have their status revealed publicly, and as a result, they usually ran around with their tails between their legs. Bai Xiaochun, on the other hand, loudly announced it in grandiose fashion.

Most of the time, he felt quite depressed when he thought about the fact that he was a hostage. But at the moment, the look on Li

Yuansheng's face left him feeling wonderful, and in fact, he couldn't help but muse that being a hostage wasn't that bad after all....

When the crowd heard Bai Xiaochun's words, they immediately erupted into chaos. The boss of the Celestial Sky Society looked like he had been struck by lightning, and his jaw was hanging open.

At long last he realized why he had never been able to dig up any information about the background of Boss Azure Dragon....

"Dammit! I can't believe he's a hostage! And even more unbelievable is how brazen he is! Hostages are supposed to go around filled with grief and indignation!!" The tears that filled the Celestial Sky Society's boss were enough to form a new Heavenspan River....

"Y-you... you...." Li Yuansheng's mind was reeling so hard he couldn't even talk. He had the power to drive out any ordinary disciple, no matter what their background was. However, even if he were more powerful than he was, there was no way he could do anything to a hostage, who was an important connection between two sects. Not even Nascent Soul cultivators could do such a thing. Only a Deva Realm expert would have the authority to weigh in on the matter, and the clan deva would definitely not do so for such a trivial matter.

Clearly, his threat from moments ago had been nothing more than lunacy, and to have it thrown back at him in this way made it feel like had just been slapped across the face. Not only did rage build up in his heart, but his face flushed bright red, and he then coughed up a mouthful of blood. Howling with rage, he spun and shot back toward the rainbow district, not pausing for even a moment along the way.

Waving his hand, Bai Xiaochun called, "Ai, what are you leaving for!? Hey, Brother Li! Don't go! You promised to get me out of the

sect within three days!”

When his words reached Li Yuansheng’s ears, Li Yuansheng coughed up another mouthful of blood and then howled, “Intolerable bully!!”

At the same time, he pushed forward with greater speed than before.

He wasn’t the only one. The remaining silkpants in the area looked over at Bai Xiaochun with fear and awe at his incisive methods. Bowing their heads, they quickly fled, the more able ones supporting the injured ones on their shoulders.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat as they made their way off. Then, he flicked his sleeve proudly and sighed in disappointment.

“I really hate it when people pretend to be threatening and awesome, only to turn out to be fakers. If you can’t get me out of the sect, don’t pretend you can! There’s nothing funny about practical jokes!” Sighing, he looked down at the tavern, and his Dao protectors, who didn’t seem to know whether to laugh or cry. Finally, he headed back into his room to continue his cultivation.

Before long, word about Bai Xiaochun being a hostage began to spread through Sky City. It was a momentous development, and cleared up a lot of suspicions people had harbored. Soon, word even spread to the other three cities in the sect, leaving everyone there completely astonished.

That was especially true of the hostages in the cities belonging to the Starry River Court, Polarity River Court, and Dao River Court. All of them were left completely flabbergasted.

“I never realized you could be so domineering as a hostage....”

“I really need to go pay a visit to this Bai Xiaochun!”

Virtually all of them decided to go meet Bai Xiaochun and chat about their experiences as hostages, and perhaps get some advice about how to improve their situation in the sect.

As for the Celestial Sky Society, their repeated setbacks left them with no other choice than to bow their heads. They knew that there was nothing they could do to fight Bai Xiaochun directly. After more meetings, the Celestial Sky Society boss finally gritted his teeth and said, “Since we can’t provoke him, let’s just get him out of Sky City!!”

Chapter 405: Promotion....

The rules governing the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's promotion system worked in two ways. Either disciples voluntarily handed over 1,000,000 merit points to get their promotion, or, if they saved up enough merit points, the sect's grand spell formation would detect it and automatically promote them.

Such a method had been enacted to prevent any individual from saving too many merit points, and also to control inflation within the sect. Furthermore, it wasn't under the control of any individual, but rather, the spell formation, which was linked to the identity medallions of all disciples, making it impossible to cheat.

Of course, the second method was rarely seen, as it required a very large number of merit points. When a person's merit points exceeded the limit, they became like a beacon on a dark night, and instantly attracted the attention of the spell formation.

Bai Xiaochun had used this exact method on Song Que. By transferring a large amount of merit points from the Azure Dragon Society to Song Que's identity medallion, it ensured that as soon as he flew out into the open, he was noticed and whisked away to become a yellow-robed disciple.

At the moment, the leaders of the Celestial Sky Society were so terrified of Bai Xiaochun that they decided they had to simply get him out of the city.

"We'll only have one chance. If we don't get enough merit points into his command medallion, the strategy won't work, and after that, Boss Azure Dragon will be on guard. If we tried to do it a second time, it would be very difficult."

"Let's throw caution to the wind! The Celestial Sky Society will foot the bill to get him out! Even all those merit points will be worth it if we can achieve that goal!" After making their decision, they waited a few more days until the fluctuations of the sect's

grand spell formation had reached a certain level of intensity. That night, the moon hung high and bright in the sky, bathing the lands with white moonlight. Although it made everything seem soft and hazy, Sky City was just as busy at night as it was during the day.

In the desert on the edge of the west district, the Azure Dragon Society's tavern was in operation as it usually was. Cultivators came and went, not willing to rest just because it was dark outside.

Bai Xiaochun was sitting at a table in the tavern, flanked by two maid servants who were cooling him with large fans. If those fans had been on display outside of the tavern, they would have caused quite a stir. In terms of their value in merit points, either one would be enough to purchase a powerful magical treasure. However, as far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, they might as well have just been ordinary fans.

Even the table itself had been crafted from 1,000-year-old mahogany. If that wood had been used to make something like a flying sword, it would have been an extraordinary weapon, but in this case, it had simply been made into a table....

The table was piled with all sorts of delicacies, the type that would go for astronomical prices on the outside. Even the bowls and the chopsticks had magical properties.

The room was extravagantly decorated, so much so that a Nascent Soul cultivator who entered it would be shocked.

Xu Baocai, Master God-Diviner, and Big Fatty Zhang were all there as well, eating and drinking to their hearts' content. As they laughed and chatted, Chen Manyao sat demurely next to Bai Xiaochun, fanning herself with her own fan, occasionally joining in on the conversation.

Their clothes were extremely luxurious, exactly the type you would expect the nouveau riche-type to wear....

"So," Bai Xiaochun said, "it turns out you can't trust anything

that Li Yuansheng guy says. Three days have passed, and nobody has said I could leave the city.” Rubbing his belly, he let out a contented burp.

Xu Baocai chuckled and said, “You know, Junior Patriarch, things are actually pretty good here. Hahaha! We get the best to eat and drink, and the best of everything else. We wouldn’t even have it this good off in the River-Defying Sect. Although now I’m really curious about what life in the rainbow district is like.”

“Look!” Bai Xiaochun suddenly shouted, pointing at Xu Baocai and hurrying over to throw his arm around Big Fatty Zhang. “Look at this guy! You see that? That’s ambition. Keep it up, Xu Baocai, keep it up.” With that he let out a loud guffaw. “It’s a good thing we never let him into the Ovens back in the day. Come on, Xu Baocai, we have it way better off here than the rainbow district! Only an idiot would want to get promoted. I’m going to stay right here for the rest of my life!” He emphasized his last words with a dramatic wave of his hand, looking very, very satisfied.

Master God-Diviner and Big Fatty Zhang roared with laughter, and Xu Baocai looked a bit embarrassed. Just when he was about to defend himself, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively and said, “Listen to me, guys—”

Just when he was about to brag about his visit to the rainbow district, and explain how everyone there was so cold and distant, his expression suddenly flickered as he realized that his bag of holding was vibrating. Slapping it, he produced his identity medallion and scanned it with divine sense.

Shocked, he realized that his merit point balance was increasing rapidly.

“What’s going on?” he said, puzzled. Then his eyes widened as, in the briefest of moments, his balance shot past 1,000,000. Soon, he had 2,000,000 merit points. Then 3,000,000. Then 4,000,000!

Shrieking in terror, and without any time to offer any

explanations, he quickly began to transfer merit points to the others. However, no matter how quickly he acted, it was still too slow. Within the blink of an eye, his merit point balance reached more than 5,000,000.

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's grand spell formation was most sensitive and active during the full moon, and it just so happened that the moon outside was shining as brightly as a signal fire. It took only a moment for the spell formation to notice what was happening, and send power rushing into the tavern, and the room Bai Xiaochun was in.

"No!!" he screamed. To the shock of Master God-Diviner, Xu Baocai, Big Fatty Zhang, and Chen Manyao, and before any of them could react, the stream of light entered the room and wrapped around Bai Xiaochun.

Even as the light grabbed him, his merit point balance continued to increase with maddening speed. Unexpectedly, it had already reached more than 7,000,000.

That incredible balance seemed to anger the spell formation, which was by no means gentle as it grabbed Bai Xiaochun and yanked him out of the room and up into the sky.

As Bai Xiaochun's screams echoed out in all directions, his four Dao protectors rushed out, shaken, and yet completely helpless to do anything.

"I don't wanna go! I wanna stay here! I don't wanna become a yellow-robed disciple! I'm much more suited to being an orange-robed disciple...." By this point, it was obvious that he had fallen victim to the scheming of the Celestial Sky Society. Furthermore, considering the incredible sum of merit points involved, it was clear how determined the leaders of the Celestial Sky Society were to get rid of him.

The beam of light which was dragging Bai Xiaochun away was far larger and brighter than the usual type. As such, it lit up the night

sky, filling all of Sky City, drawing the attention of numerous gazes, many of which were filled with excitement.

As for all of the cultivators who had suffered the side-effects of the Fantasy Pills and the Ultra Diet Supplement Pills, they couldn't have been more delighted. Some of them even started banging on drums and gongs as they cheered.

“Old Devil Bai is finally leaving!!”

“The heavens do have eyes! Boss Azure Dragon is getting promoted!”

“Hahaha! That fiend is the number one villain in Sky City. Now that he's leaving, it's like a huge mountain is being lifted off of our shoulders!!”

The cheers in the city mixed with Bai Xiaochun's screams to echo out into the night. His Dao protectors looked on with shocked expressions as the powerful beam of light dragged Bai Xiaochun through the night sky toward Sky Quarter Rainbow.

On that very rainbow, the disciples in charge of receiving other newly promoted disciples were standing on the official welcoming platform, expressions of disbelief on their faces as they looked down at the cheering Sky City. If they could hear the sound from that far up, it could only be imagined how enthusiastic the crowds were down below....

The disciples exchanged awkward glances. Never before had they seen such tumult in the city below, and never had they seen the beam of light sent to welcome a new disciple to the rainbow district being so large and bright. Soon, Bai Xiaochun was there in front of them....

As soon as Bai Xiaochun sensed the cold gazes of the other disciples, he wailed, “I don't wanna become a yellow-robed disciple!”

Tears even welled up in his eyes as he cursed his previous

complacency, and his carelessness in not taking preventative measures against such tactics as the Celestial Sky Society had just used.

The grief that spilled from his heart into his voice was the kind that would incite sorrow in the hearts of anyone who heard it, and caused the surrounding disciples' jaws to drop. Usually, people who were brought up to the rainbow district were beside themselves with joy. This was their first time seeing anyone sad about the matter.

Bai Xiaochun sighed repeatedly, and appeared to be on the verge of tears as he left the welcoming platform. His surroundings were beautiful, with strong spiritual energy, pools and ponds everywhere, and even immortal mountains. However, considering how cold and indifferent everyone was, Bai Xiaochun still felt that his tavern was a much better place.

Scowling, he realized that he simply had to accept the situation.

Sighing, he murmured to himself, "You just can't be too outstanding. Ai. I never thought that I, Bai Xiaochun, who always tries to keep such a low profile, would be ripped away from the mundane world to become a yellow-robed disciple."

Chapter 406: Sky Quarter

The two disciples escorting Bai Xiaochun both wore yellow robes, and eyed Bai Xiaochun more than a few times as they walked along, apparently unsure of what to make of him.

After all, he had made quite a commotion upon his arrival. Usually, these two yellow-robed disciples were quite harsh in their treatment of newcomers, but for some reason, they were being very polite to Bai Xiaochun.

“Sky Quarter Rainbow has the Ten Halls,” one of them explained, “and all newly promoted yellow-robed disciples end up joining one of them. The selection process doesn’t happen each time a disciple is promoted, but rather in groups, once per year.”

“However, your luck runs strong, Fellow Daoist Bai,” said the other. “We only have four months to go until the next Hall Selection Forum.” Not only were these two explaining how things worked on Sky Quarter Rainbow, they were also explaining his new responsibilities.

“One of the reasons Sky Quarter Rainbow is divided up into five rings is because of the Ten Halls. The inner ring is where the peak lord lives, and nobody can go there without being summoned. As for the other areas, they are set aside for use by the Ten Halls.”

Last time Bai Xiaochun had been here, he had merely been passing through, but this time, thanks to the introduction given by these two disciples, he was already coming to a much better understanding of Sky Quarter Rainbow.

Although it was called a rainbow, it actually had flat ground inside just like any other location. There was a seven-colored sky overhead, and the dirt beneath their feet also featured seven colors, although it wasn’t generally visible because of the green limestone which covered almost everything.

The only places where the seven-colored dirt was visible was on the immortal mountains which rose up in certain locations. What left the deepest impression of all on Bai Xiaochun was how soft and gentle the spiritual energy was. He could already tell that it would be very easy to absorb, and wouldn't lead to the terrifying energy drainage that was common in Sky City.

From his current vantagepoint, Bai Xiaochun could look to the side and see lushly vegetated hills and mountains interspersed with blue bodies of water, which were the lands of Heavenspan. There was also a golden channel of water stretching off as far as the eye could see, which was the Heavenspan River.

In the other direction was the vast and boundless sea!

Last time Bai Xiaochun had been here, he had come to the inner ring, and hadn't been able to see much. At the moment, though, he was in the outer ring, and was able to glimpse the magnificent golden waters of the sea. The sheer grandeur caused him to gasp in shock.

Furthermore, the strength of the spiritual energy in that sea seemed beyond imagination. It even caused mighty waves to roll across the surface of the water, the crashing of which even reached all the way to the rainbow and Bai Xiaochun's ears.

"That's the Heavenspan Sea?" he murmured, shaken.

The two cultivators escorting him couldn't conceal the pride which rose up on their faces. After all, being a yellow-robed disciple in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was truly a glorious position. One of them smiled.

"That's right. Only disciples who get promoted to the yellow-robed level qualify to live here and enjoy the majestic sight of the Heavenspan Sea!"

That sea formed the center of the lands of Heavenspan, and was the source of its spiritual energy. It was a sea that would never dry

up, a sea that would flourish for all eternity!

As Bai Xiaochun looked at the Heavenspan Sea, he was struck with the sudden impulse to fly out and explore it. After a moment, he took a deep breath and turned his gaze to look at the ancient battleship which existed on top of the waterfall.

From this vantage point, it was clearly visible. It was pitch black, and appeared to be in a state of extreme damage and dilapidation, especially its sails. Within the ship, terrifying, shadowy figures floated here and there.

The mere sight of it caused Bai Xiaochun's hair to stand on end, and he quickly looked away.

As they walked along, Bai Xiaochun caught sight of other cultivators who lived on Sky Quarter Rainbow. All of them were yellow-robed disciples, without a single one wearing robes of green or cyan. From what Bai Xiaochun could tell, the green-and cyan-robed disciples were either very rare, or lived in a different area.

Just as he remembered from his last time here, the cultivators were very aloof and cold. None of them spoke to each other; at most, they would occasionally exchange a glance. Because of that, Sky Quarter Rainbow was a very quiet place.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't used to such silence, but there was little he could do about it. The cultivators escorting him along eventually took him to the location where new disciples were required to check in. He handed over his identity medallion for inspection, and then was given a yellow robe and a jade slip key to an immortal's cave. After exchanging a few parting words, the two disciples who had led him up to this point took their leave.

Bai Xiaochun sized up his surroundings, feeling very out-of-place and very alone. Frowning, he followed the map in the jade slip until he found his immortal's cave on the very edge of the fifth ring.

It was a very ordinary immortal's cave, and the only good thing about it was that if he stood at the window, he could catch a glimpse of the sea far off in the distance.

The cave was relatively small and ordinary, but most newly-promoted disciples would be elated to be given such a dwelling, which vastly exceeded the standards of virtually every cultivator in Sky City.

But to Bai Xiaochun, it was like a hovel compared to his room back in his tavern. Sighing, he stood there looking around blankly for a moment, then resigned himself to his misfortune and began to tidy the place up. A bit later, he sat down cross-legged to do some cultivation.

As his session of cultivation progressed, he grew more and more calm. Sure enough, his progress surpassed what he could accomplish in Sky City, and plus, there was no energy drainage. Once again, he was filled with the sensation that he didn't need to eat food.

With every breath he took, boundless spiritual energy poured into him, filling his body, swirling here and there. Gradually, Bai Xiaochun immersed himself in his cultivation.

During the following ten days, he spent much of his time in cultivation, but also took some time to explore and familiarize himself with his new surroundings. Whenever he encountered fellow disciples, they treated him very coldly. Even if he called out a greeting, they would ignore him.

However, he soon got a good sense of the true power of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. During those ten days, he realized that almost all of the yellow-robed disciples he encountered on Sky Quarter Rainbow were Core Formation cultivators!

Although a few were in Foundation Establishment, most of those were in the quasi-Core stage. Everyone possessed incredible battle prowess, which was quite a shock to Bai Xiaochun.

He also asked about the location where the Living Mountain Incantation was intended to be cultivated, but was disappointed to find that it wasn't on Sky Quarter Rainbow at all. Instead, it was on the second level of rainbows, where the sect leader resided.

Looking up at the rainbows above him, he murmured, "On the second level, there are two rainbows, the one on the left being for the devas, and the one on the right set aside for the sect leader, as well as various training grounds and trials by fire...."

He was a newcomer, and because of how everyone was so cold and indifferent, it wasn't easy for him to get information.

After becoming a yellow-robed disciple, there were certain restrictions regarding returning to Sky City. Such restrictions didn't really apply to people like Li Yuansheng and his friends, but for Bai Xiaochun, getting back down to the city was a very complicated ordeal.

However, jade slips could still be used to communicate, and he soon got news from Master God-Diviner and the other Dao protectors. After Bai Xiaochun's departure, the mood in the Azure Dragon Society had turned very bleak. However, after making some adjustments to the profit margins, they were fairly certain they would be able to get by.

Although the Celestial Sky Society had begun to cause more problems, they still feared Bai Xiaochun, and thus, didn't do anything overtly aggressive. The Dao protectors also told him that they planned to handle a few important affairs regarding the tavern, and then do their best to be promoted to the rainbow district as well.

That got Bai Xiaochun very excited. Without all of his Dao protectors, he was actually very bored, with little to do other than cultivate his Undying Live Forever Technique and Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. Things went on like that for about a month, until one day in the middle of a session of cultivation, his

expression suddenly flickered. Waving his hand, he sent the door of the immortal's cave creaking open, revealing a figure approaching, bathed in the morning sunlight.

When that person saw the door of the immortal's cave open, he stopped in place for a moment, seemingly in thought, before proceeding forward again. Soon, his handsome, grim face was clearly visible.

He was none other than Song Que!

"Que'er!" Bai Xiaochun exclaimed happily as he shot to his feet. Just when he was about to rush forward to pull Song Que inside, Song Que snorted coldly and took a few steps back, refusing to enter.

"Bai Xiaochun," he said in a stony voice, "the details regarding my promotion to yellow-robed disciple aren't important. What's important is that I owe you because of it. There are some things you probably haven't been told about since you're new, so listen up!

"First. In three months, both you and I will be part of the Hall Selection Forum. Because I got here a bit before you did, I've learned a few things about it. There are some halls which many people desire to enter, mostly because they are safer, and can even lead to lucrative opportunities. Some examples are the Hall of Magical Techniques, the Hall of Defenders, and the Hall of Spirit Enhancement. However, some halls are considered perilous, and there are high mortality rates among the disciples who join them. Most notable among those are the Hall of Covert Operations and the Hall of Devil Slayers! Be careful when the time comes!

"Second. During the month since you've arrived, word has spread that someone is out to give you a hard time... or worse. You should consider who it is you might have offended and take precautions!" With a final look at Bai Xiaochun, Song Que turned and left. Apparently, his only reason in coming had been in an

attempt to pay back his debt of merit points.

Chapter 407: Hall of... of Devil Slayers?

A thoughtful expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face as he watched Song Que hurrying off. Before long, though, a slight smile could be seen.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun didn't view Song Que as being any sort of rival. In fact, he actually believed Song Que's life to be a bit rough. He went around all the time trying to look tough, surrounded by a murderous aura, constantly looking to pick fights.

Bai Xiaochun wouldn't forget how he had come to offer these warnings. After some thought, he came to the conclusion that, based on what Song Que had told him, it was likely that Li Yuansheng was looking for an opportunity to cause problems for him because of the matters with the Celestial Sky Society.

Unfortunately, knowing the identity of the person targeting him didn't really provide much help. After all, it would be impossible to prepare for all of the ways Li Yuansheng could get to him in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. The only thing he could do was be as cautious as possible.

"If we were in the River-Defying Sect, I'd definitely show him a thing or two!" Bai Xiaochun let out a harrumph and proceeded to ponder how he would handle the situation if he were in Li Yuansheng's shoes. After a moment, his eyes suddenly lit up.

"The Hall Selection Forum!!" he thought, a tremor passing through him. The more he thought about it, the grimmer his expression grew, and the more certain he was that the Hall Selection Forum was where Li Yuansheng would try to make a move on him. However, Bai Xiaochun couldn't think of any way to counter such a move. At one point, he even considered trying to reach out to the Sky Quarter peak lord.

Unfortunately, without being expressly summoned by the peak lord, it was impossible to gain access to the inner ring. Even a

simple visit to offer greetings had to be approved by the peak lord, and despite going on several occasions to do just that, Bai Xiaochun was never allowed to enter, and was forced to return gloomily to his immortal's cave.

He basically had no options at the moment, so he simply decided to wait it out until his Dao protectors arrived. Soon, Master God-Diviner, Big Fatty Zhang, and Chen Manyao all paid the requisite number of merit points to get their promotions.

Xu Baocai was the only one who stayed behind. After all, business in the tavern still had to be managed. The tavern itself was the main reason everyone had been able to get up to the rainbow district to begin with, and someone had to stay behind to run it, at least for a while.

After being received by the disciples at the welcoming platform, the Dao protectors got their clothing and identity medallions and then went to find Bai Xiaochun. It was a happy reunion, even for Chen Manyao. After working closely with Bai Xiaochun and everyone else, and gaining the approval of Bai Xiaochun himself, she was now considered to be part of their circle of friends.

After the initial reunion was over, they all sat down in Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave. First, the Dao protectors explained how things had gone in the tavern after he left, and then he told them about everything that had happened to him. When he was finished, he said, "And so, I need all of your help to figure out what to do about the Hall Selection Forum."

Master God-Diviner and Big Fatty Zhang frowned in thought, but unfortunately, they were new here, and couldn't think of a single countermeasure to take. Eventually, they looked over at Chen Manyao.

Bai Xiaochun did the same thing. Chen Manyao was from the Wildlands, and knew other agents in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, so she was obviously the best-equipped to provide a solution.

Chen Manyao smiled. “Don’t worry, Xiaochun. I should be able to take care of the situation. Just tell me which hall you want to join.”

Bai Xiaochun was so happy that he almost couldn’t hold back from leaping forward and hugging her. Laughing heartily, he said, “You’re so awesome, Yao’er! Alright. I want to join the Hall of Defenders!”

Chen Manyao’s face turned a bit red, and after glaring at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, she pulled out a jade slip to make contact with her comrades in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. After a moment passed, she gave Bai Xiaochun a smile of confirmation, which got him even more excited. At that point, Big Fatty Zhang said that he wanted to join the Hall of Spirit Enhancement, and as for Master God-Diviner, he wanted to get into the Hall of Magical Techniques.

Later, the Dao protectors left. At long last, Bai Xiaochun didn’t feel completely lonely any more. In fact, his cultivation speed even seemed to pick up, and before he knew it, three months had passed.

Including his first month, that meant four months had gone by, and it was time for Sky Quarter Rainbow’s yearly Hall Selection Forum.

That morning at dawn, the sound of tolling bells filled Sky Quarter Rainbow, and all of the disciples who had been promoted to the yellow robe level in the past year all made their way out of their immortal’s caves, looking both solemn and apprehensive.

All of them knew that their fates for the following years would be determined on this day. Whichever hall they ended up joining would determine how they grew in the years to come, and would also have a huge influence on how long they managed to stay alive. Because of that, all of them were completely on edge.

Of course, the rules of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect were

strict. The ten halls selected who would join them, not the other way around. Because the new disciples had absolutely no say in the matter, they could only wait nervously until the announcements were made.

Bai Xiaochun had long since straightened his clothing in preparation for the event. As soon as the bells began to toll, he strolled out of his immortal's cave glowing with excitement, visualizing what it would be like to join the Hall of Defenders.

Over the past few months, he had spent some merit points to get a bit more detailed information about the various halls, and knew that the Hall of Defenders could only be described as wonderful. They were tasked with defending Sky Quarter Rainbow as a whole. However, considering that Sky Quarter Rainbow was in the middle of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the chances of someone invading the place were virtually zero. Because of that, the cultivators who were members of the Hall of the Defenders tended to enforce sect rules within the rainbow district itself.

They were a very impressive group, similar to the Hall of Justice back in the Spirit Stream Sect.

Bai Xiaochun was very excited about the prospect, and was sure that as a member of the Hall of Defenders, he would surely become very famous on Sky Quarter Rainbow.

It didn't take long before more than 200 newly promoted yellow-robed disciples were hurrying toward the inner ring.

For most disciples, the Hall Selection Forum was the only time they would ever be able to visit the inner ring, where a huge square existed atop the seven-colored mountain there.

Of course, this was Bai Xiaochun's second time to the inner ring, so things were somewhat familiar to him. Upon entering the square, he caught sight of Big Fatty Zhang, Master God-Diviner, Chen Manyao, and even Song Que.

Although he was able to catch their eyes, they were separated by enough distance that it wasn't possible to exchange words. The entire square was filled with a very somber air. Before long, the sound of bells faded away, and silence filled the air for a moment before ten beams of light appeared out of nowhere and shot down toward the ground.

Instantly, crushing pressure filled the area, causing the faces of Bai Xiaochun and all the other disciples to flicker; it felt as if their bodies were being pushed down into the ground. At the same time, ten cultivators appeared.

Some were men, some women, some seemed old, some did not, but all were Nascent Soul cultivators. Three of the women were beautiful, and yet looked very stoic. Somehow, such expressions only made them seem more attractive.

As for the others, some had faces wrinkled with age, whereas others looked like young men or women. Some appeared to be kind and amiable, while others were surrounded by murderous auras, and seemed like very vicious characters.

“Greetings, Hallmasters!” It was hard to say who spoke first, but soon, all of the gathered disciples were bowing their heads and calling out greetings to the ten Nascent Soul cultivators who were the hallmasters of Sky Quarter.

Bai Xiaochun did the same, peering out of the corner of his eye at the ten Nascent Soul cultivators and wondering which one was the hallmaster of the Hall of Defenders. At the same time, he couldn't help but gasp at the power of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Even Sky Quarter Rainbow alone had enough power to dominate any sect in the Middle Reaches, assuming that sect didn't have a deva.

“And they have three other rainbows just like Sky Quarter,” he thought, shaken. “There's also Starry Quarter, Polarity Quarter, and Dao Quarter....”

At that point, one of the ten Nascent Soul cultivators said, “And now, you will come to join the hallmaster who calls your name.”

“Chen Biao!”

“Xu Ke!”

“Zhou Songli!”

As the names of the disciples were called out, they respectfully hurried over to the side of whichever Nascent Soul cultivator had called them.

“Song Que!” said one of the fierce-looking Nascent Soul cultivators. Song Que took a deep breath and flew over. Eventually, Chen Manyao was called by one of the beautiful women, and by some lucky chance, Big Fatty Zhang was called by one of the other beauties.

Master God-Diviner wasn’t sure if luck was with him when he got called by an icy-faced young man. As the crowd began to thin, Bai Xiaochun’s nervousness grew, and he continued to flash glances in the direction of the Nascent Soul cultivators, hoping to remind them of his presence.

Unfortunately, the Nascent Soul Daoist masters all had completely expressionless faces, and none of them were even looking in his direction. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun soon realized that, unexpectedly, there was one among the Nascent Soul cultivators who hadn’t said a single word so far.

He was a kindly-faced old man, who looked over the dwindling group of cultivators with a wide smile that did nothing to reveal what he was thinking.

It didn’t take long before the group of more than 200 had been whittled down to less than a dozen or so. Bai Xiaochun stood there, blinking, wondering what exactly was happening. Then he looked over at Chen Manyao and realized that she was wearing a look of shock, at which point, his heart began to sink.

By now, the nine Nascent Soul Daoist masters weren't saying anything else, and in fact, were all looking at the kindly-faced old man. The beautiful Nascent Soul cultivator who had selected Big Fatty Zhang smiled and said, "Brother Feng, we're finished with our selections."

The old man laughed heartily and then swished his sleeve.

"Alright. If you don't want this group, then I'll take them." He waved his finger, causing seven-colored light to spread out beneath the feet of Bai Xiaochun and the others and carry them over to his side.

"Very well then," he said with a smile. "I'll take my leave now." The other Nascent Soul cultivators called out farewell as he carried Bai Xiaochun and the others off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding as he looked around at the other cultivators and then nervously asked, "Senior, which hall are we?"

The old man turned and looked back at him, and the kindness that was on his face before was now nowhere to be seen. His smile was sinister, and he suddenly possessed a powerful, murderous aura that caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp. "Congratulations on being selected by the Hall of Devil Slayers!"

"The Hall... of Devil Slayers...?" Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes widening in terror. Never could he have imagined that after calling upon the help of Chen Manyao, he would actually be taken away by the Hall of Devil Slayers. Instantly, rage boiled up inside of him.

The other disciples around him had a variety of expressions on their faces, and none of them looked happy.

"Throughout the history of Sky Quarter Rainbow, the most dangerous hall of all is the Hall of Devil Slayers. They also have the highest casualty rate!"

"Heavens.... I heard that a few decades ago, the Hall of Devil

Slayers went on a mission outside the sect, and thousands of disciples died in the briefest of moments....”

“I heard that the disciples in the Hall of Devil Slayers all get sent out on missions to assassinate enemies, and can get killed at the drop of a hat....”

“Noooo....”

Chapter 408: This Square!

The entire group was crying out in alarm. None of them could have guessed that they would actually have been selected by the Hall of Devil Slayers, and even as they trembled in terror, the hallmaster glared back and said, “Shut up, all of you!”

His thunderous voice instantly crushed the entire group into silence. Neither Bai Xiaochun nor any of the rest of them could reconcile the kindly-faced old man from before with this stern hallmaster and his sharp gaze.

“In the Hall of Devil Slayers, we subdue demons and exorcise devils. The Dao we pursue is that of slaughtering our enemies. Do the lot of you really wish to forsake such honor and glory? Listen up. I’m only going to use ten percent of my speed, so don’t fall behind. The last person to meet me in the grand square of the Hall of Devil Slayers’ main temple will immediately be sent out on a very ‘important’ mission! Of course, I’m the type of person who likes to offer rewards in addition to punishments. If any of you can beat me to the square, you won’t have to go on any missions for the next three years!” With a cold snort, he pushed forward with greater speed.

Everyone gasped. From the hallmaster’s tone of voice, whatever ‘important’ mission he had in mind would not be a good thing for any of them. Without any hesitation, all of them shot forward with all the speed they could muster.

Bai Xiaochun appeared to be on the verge of tears, and at the same time, was furious at having been screwed over. That, coupled with his terror regarding the Hall of Devil Slayers, caused him to speed after the hallmaster as quickly as possible, his mind filled with all the rumors he had heard recently.

Especially terrifying were the quavering words spoken by his fellow disciples moments ago.

“It probably wasn’t Chen Manyao’s fault. She has no reason to screw me over. Most likely, she just didn’t have enough backing to keep me safe. I’d bet everything that it was Li Yuansheng and his deva clan. He’s pulling out all the stops to try to get me killed!” Gritting his teeth, he looked around to measure how fast his fellow disciples were, after which his eyes flashed with determination, and he picked up speed.

As he accelerated, the wind screamed past his ears, and he left behind nothing more than afterimages. In the blink of an eye, he caught up with the leaders of the pack, barreling forward as if he were fleeing for his life.

Not only did he not wish to come in last, he couldn’t stop thinking about the possible reward if he could beat the hallmaster to the square. The idea of being exempt from missions for three years was like rocket fuel inside of him. His eyes were completely bloodshot as he gritted his teeth and kept his eyes fixed on the old Nascent Soul cultivator up ahead. Although the hallmaster was moving quickly, he obviously wasn’t going all out. In fact, he was strolling casually through the air, each step taking him thousands of meters along.

As far as the hallmaster was concerned, it would be quite impressive if any of the disciples could merely keep up with him at this pace. Furthermore, putting them in their place a bit also had its benefits. After all, life in the Hall of Devil Slayers was a bitter one, and he always tried to take the new recruits down a notch or two.

Sighing, he proceeded along up ahead when suddenly, he heard a whistling sound behind him, causing a look of surprise to play out on his face. Sending his divine sense back, he saw Bai Xiaochun flying along at an almost impossible speed, passing all of his comrades and actually closing in toward him. In fact, he was only moments away from catching up altogether.

“Eee?” the hallmaster muttered in surprise. In all the years he

had selected new recruits for the Hall of Devil Slayers, never had he encountered anyone this fast. Having no other choice, he sped up a little bit, instantly pushing himself several hundred meters forward.

Bai Xiaochun was gasping for breath as he caught up, only to see the hallmaster suddenly accelerate and put a few hundred meters between the two of them. As the anxiety welled up inside of him, two wings appeared, which gave him another explosive burst of speed.

As the two of them raced along, it was clear to see that Bai Xiaochun was actually moving a bit faster than the hallmaster. With his wings, his fleshly body power, and his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, he was soon able to close the distance, until he was only a few dozen meters behind the hallmaster.

The hallmaster's eyes widened, and pushed himself along a bit faster. By this point, he was virtually at his limit when using only ten percent of his power. Through all the years that he had been tasked with selecting new disciples, he had never encountered anyone who could force him to use more than ten percent. However, to his shock, he found that Bai Xiaochun was nothing like the other disciples.

In fact, the hallmaster also realized that if he only used ten percent of his cultivation base power, then at some point, Bai Xiaochun would actually pass him up.

By now, they could actually see the Hall of Devil Slayers up ahead, and that was when Bai Xiaochun actually pulled up alongside the hallmaster. His panting gasps were audible in all directions, and blue veins were bulging out of his forehead. From the look in his eye, his life was on the line.

As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, his life really was on the line. Up ahead was the Hall of Devil Slayers, a huge mountain surrounded by swirling clouds and covered with countless

pavilions, temples and other buildings. Cultivators were hustling about everywhere, and most notable of all were the enormous characters carved upon the mountain itself!

Hall of Devil Slayers!

Each character that made up the name was fully 300 meters tall and as red as blood. Not only did they make a shocking sight, they emanated a terrifying, murderous aura.

Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted as he realized that he was definitely going to pass up the hallmaster, and then win three years of being exempt from going on missions.

"What does this little punk think he's doing?" the hallmaster thought, glaring over. "Trying to embarrass me?!"

He was a Nascent Soul Daoist master with a profoundly high cultivation base. Even though he was limiting himself to ten percent of his cultivation base power, it would still be quite a loss of face if someone in the younger generation actually surpassed him. Frowning, he looked at the Hall of Devil Slayers up ahead, and was just hesitating about what to do when....

Bai Xiaochun was only about 3,000 meters away from his final destination. Suddenly, he shot forward with even greater speed, drawing upon the Mountain Shaking Bash, which caused rumbling sounds to echo out as he passed the hallmaster. Within moments, he would be stepping down onto the square.

The hallmaster's glare intensified, and inwardly, he was cursing. Taking a step forward, he finally resorted to a minor teleportation.

However, even as he did, Bai Xiaochun sent frigid qi roiling out, creating a 3,000-meter area of frozen ice around him. Suddenly, he also did something that resembled a minor teleportation, and in the following moment, was right at the temple standing over the square.

The hallmaster's jaw dropped as widely as if he had just seen a

ghost as he also finished his teleportation.

“I’m first!” Bai Xiaochun cried, simultaneously panting for breath. “Hahahahaha!!”

Looking around, he was absolutely convinced that he was the first person to reach this spot. It was in that moment that an ancient voice floated over to him from off in the distance.

“Not bad. You really did get there first. However, what are you doing way over there? The square I was talking about is right here.” Bai Xiaochun spun, his jaw dropping as he realized that the hallmaster was actually standing in another square some distance away, smiling broadly at him.

Bai Xiaochun looked around and confirmed that he was standing in the square outside the main temple, and that the hallmaster was in the square of one of the side temples. Instantly, Bai Xiaochun’s face turned grim, and dejection rose up in his heart.

“You....” he said, almost on the verge of tears. Despite the hallmaster’s shamelessness, there was nothing Bai Xiaochun could do about it, so he simply sighed sadly and then hurried over. Clasp hands and bowing deeply, he said, “Disciple Bai Xiaochun offers formal greetings, Hallmaster!”

The hallmaster smiled, once again looking kindly like he had before. However, inwardly he was snorting coldly, and had determined not to forget that Bai Xiaochun had actually gone so far as to surpass his own speed.

Now that the hallmaster had arrived, other members of the Hall of Devil Slayers began to hurry over. The first to arrive was a middle-aged cultivator with a goatee and a late Core Formation cultivation base. He clasped hands respectfully in greeting to the hallmaster, and also offered some fawning words that he apparently didn’t mind Bai Xiaochun hearing.

The hallmaster smiled and nodded in response, after which the

middle-aged man stood off to the side, where he looked at Bai Xiaochun with a sparkling glint of interest.

Before long, the other new recruits arrived, the last one being a trembling quasi-Core cultivator. The hallmaster gave him a cold look and then looked away. However, the man with the goatee seemed to have marked the last-place disciple with his eyes.

“I am Feng Youde, hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers. From now on, all of you are cultivators of the Hall of Devil Slayers, and must abide by all of our rules and customs. Master Cloud-Dao, I’ll leave them in your hands!” With that, the hallmaster flashed into motion, flying up toward the summit of the mountain, leaving all the new recruits standing around with blank expressions.

The man with the goatee, whom the hallmaster had called Master Cloud-Dao, flashed a cold smile at Bai Xiaochun and the others and then said, “There is no need for fear, ladies and gentlemen. I am your humble servant Master Cloud-Dao, the honor guard of the Hall of Devil Slayers. From now on, we’re all on the same team. However, your first task as new recruits is to go out alone on a mission, which I will assign to you right now.” For some reason, it seemed like something special glittered in his eyes when he looked at Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 409: Going On A Mission....

“Zhao Ke, you will go to the Nineshadows Continent to kill the devil cultivator Zhou Wu. Last month, he committed murder, and even went to the lengths of forging an evil magical weapon. He must be eliminated!

“Lu Peng, your mission is to kill Chen Fan from the Yunchen Clan. He has an early Core Formation cultivation base, but according to our latest information, he was gravely injured recently, so he shouldn’t put up much of a fight. [Bring back his head!](#)

“Han Ping, your destination is the Holypatron Continent, where you will be escorting a representative of the Liumin Clan to bring their yearly tribute to the sect!”

As Master Cloud-Dao rattled off the missions, it was clear that some were more dangerous than others, but generally speaking, they were all roughly within the same level of difficulty. After all, this group had just joined the Hall of Devil Slayers, and Master Cloud-Dao wasn’t trying to intentionally make things hard for them. As for the merit point rewards for the missions, the smallest was 20,000, with the largest being multiple times higher than that.

As for the cultivator who had come in last in the race to the square, his mission actually didn’t seem very hard at all. All he had to do was deliver a message to a place called Grandforest Mountain.

Most of the cultivators seemed relieved after hearing their missions. As for Bai Xiaochun, he continued to wait nervously for Master Cloud-Dao to speak his name and explain his mission.

“Bai Xiaochun, you will travel to Whitegrove Cliff on the [Eternalflux](#) Continent to kill the notorious sex fiend Zuo Hengfeng, a cultivator in the late Foundation Establishment stage. Your reward upon success will be 30,000 merit points.” With that, he

tossed a jade slip to Bai Xiaochun and went on to assign more missions. Soon, everyone had their missions, after which Master Cloud-Dao looked over the group and smiled.

“Fellow Daoists, these first missions of yours shouldn’t be very difficult, and I truly hope they go smoothly. However, if any of you dare to disrespect the arrangements set forth by the Hall of Devil Slayers by not going on your assigned mission, you will face a punishment the likes of which you can’t even imagine. Very well, you have two hours to prepare before leaving!” Master Cloud-Dao swished his sleeve and left. Meanwhile, other disciples from the Hall of Devil Slayers who had been waiting off to the side hurried over with uniforms and identity medallions for the new recruits.

Everyone exchanged unsettled glances and then, not being in the mood for chit-chat, rushed away to prepare as well as they could for their missions.

Bai Xiaochun did the same, hurrying back to his immortal’s cave as quickly as possible. Along the way, he couldn’t stop thinking about how he didn’t want to go out on the mission. Unfortunately, this wasn’t the River-Defying Sect, and he didn’t have any basis upon which to refuse to go.

“Kill the notorious sex fiend Zuo Hengfeng? Is he really in the late Foundation Establishment stage? If so, then the mission shouldn’t be very hard at all!” However, something seemed suspicious about the whole thing. Chen Manyao had attempted to arrange things, but he had still ended up in the Hall of Devil Slayers. Although he wasn’t sure how Li Yuansheng had pulled it off, he couldn’t shake the feeling that this first mission would somehow be very dangerous.

After arriving at his immortal’s cave, he sat there nervously, waiting for everyone to return. Big Fatty Zhang came first, then Master God-Diviner, and finally, Chen Manyao, who immediately rushed to apologize and explain.

“Junior Patriarch, I really did my best. I made some inquiries after the fact and confirmed that it was Li Yuansheng who ruined my plans....”

Big Fatty Zhang and Master God-Diviner were very angry. Although they had ended up going to the halls they had wanted, for Bai Xiaochun to end up in the most dangerous place of all, the Hall of Devil Slayers, left them incensed.

Bai Xiaochun sighed. By this point, he wasn't worried about how he had ended up in the Hall of Devil Slayers, he was more concerned with exactly how dangerous this mission of his was going to be.

Scowling on the verge of tears, Bai Xiaochun said, “Look, we might as well drop that topic. Hurry up and look into this mission for me. What's so dangerous about it? I have to leave within the hour.”

With that, he went on to explain everything he knew about the mission.

His Dao protectors nodded seriously, and instead of wasting time sitting around talking about the matter, they all hurried away to see if they could get any information.

However, there was very little time to work with. Bai Xiaochun quickly packed what he would take with him on the mission, and then watched the time ticking down on the jade slip. When there was only enough time left for an incense stick to burn, he walked out of his immortal's cave, looking quite crestfallen.

Big Fatty Zhang and Chen Manyao were still trying to find information for him. As for Master God-Diviner, he called upon the full power of his cultivation base to perform a divination.

“Don't worry, Junior Patriarch,” he said somberly. “My divinations are always very accurate. Although you will face some danger on this outing, as well as some misfortunes, in the end, a

person of very high rank will come to your aid!” Actually, not even Master God-Diviner was sure whether he was actually offering a true prediction, or just comforting Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun let out a long sigh, and was about to say something when the mission jade slip began to emit intense light, urging him to leave the sect and begin his mission.

Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth, and from the look in his eyes, he seemed ready to throw caution to the wind. With that, he rushed over the teleportation portal, where he was whisked away to the Eternalflux Continent.

The Eternalflux Continent was one of 97 continents within the territory of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Although it wasn't considered very remote, it was still some distance from the sect itself.

Although it was well within teleportation range of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the teleportation portal itself was on the edge of the continent, some distance away from Whitegrove Cliff itself.

It was currently summer, and the jungle was very hot and humid. Mountains zig-zagged across the landscape, and there were no signs of human habitation, not even in the area near the teleportation portal.

The portal was located in a mountainous valley, surrounded by restrictive spells and other defenses, making it impossible for anyone other than cultivators from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to use it.

After the glitter of the teleportation light faded away, Bai Xiaochun was revealed, long-faced and clearly not in a good mood.

“I sure hope this mission goes smoothly....” he murmured to himself. When he thought back to the mission into the Luo Chen Mountains, he couldn't forget about how smoothly it had gone at first. Everything had seemed quite safe until the very end.

“I shouldn’t think about that. I’ll just do what I can and make sure I don’t lose my poor little life. If I can’t handle the mission, I’ll just abandon it.” Gritting his teeth, he double-checked his magical items, making sure he had his Renegade Dragon Horn ready, as well as his Ancient Devil Scale and the Landscape of Nine Provinces. With those three precious treasures at his side, he was a bit more confident.

“You just wait until I get back, Li Yuansheng. Things aren’t over between us yet!” Gritting his teeth, he sighed and thought back on the wonderful life he had led in Sky City, and how coming to the rainbow district had been like falling into the depths of the Yellow Springs.

Within the mission jade slip was a map. After confirming his current location, he began to fly along at a good pace in the direction of Whitegrove Cliff.

Down below, the terrain was covered with thick jungle, complete with enormous, towering trees. As he went along, he didn’t see anybody within the jungle itself. The only thing on the ground was a thick blanket of leaves which had been decaying there for who knew how many years. In many areas, the leaves had rotted into nothing more than a sludge.

It was currently overcast, and although it wasn’t raining, the muffled sound of thunder could be heard.

The entire place seemed very desolate, and left Bai Xiaochun feeling very, very alone. He couldn’t help but sigh repeatedly.

“The best thing would be to find some of the local cultivators and see if I can get some news about Whitegrove Cliff and this Zuo Hengfeng.” After a moment, he changed out of his yellow robes and into a more nondescript outfit, after which he went about trying to find some locals.

However, he really did seem to be in an out-of-the-way location. After spending ten full days searching, he couldn’t find a single

cultivator in the jungle. The only thing he saw was the occasional wild beast.

One of them was a 300-meter-long anaconda, and once he even caught sight of a flock of birds with human heads and pulsing murderous auras. Almost in the same moment that he noticed the birds, a mouth suddenly open up in one of the trees, which then gobbled one of them up. The sight of that caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to grow numb, and he even climbed a bit higher into the air as he flew along.

“Something really seems off here. Don't tell me that this Eternalflux Continent is completely uninhabited...?” The deeper he got into the jungle, the more beasts he saw down below. There were even some who were comparable in power to the Core Formation stage. At that point, Bai Xiaochun stopped in place.

“How could late Foundation Establishment cultivators live permanently in a place like this?!?!”

Even as he was pondering the issue, he saw a huge lizard leap up from the jungle and fly toward the clouds. As it sped higher and higher, it increased in size, and to Bai Xiaochun's wide-eyed shock, transformed into a flood dragon!!

As it swirled about in the clouds emanating terrifying pressure, Bai Xiaochun gasped and backed up.

“I can't do this mission! There's no way. Is the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect trying to get me killed!?” Eyes bloodshot, he gritted his teeth, spun in place, and headed back in the direction of the teleportation portal.

The Chinese characters for this Chen Fan are different than the Chen Fan from ISSTH

I just wanted to point out that in Chinese, what I am translating as Eternalflux is the term for “perpetual motion.” In Chinese “perpetual motion” is “eternal motion,” and considering the

importance of “eternity/eternal” in the title of the story, I wanted to keep that word. Up to now, I’ve kept the naming convention for the continents as a single word, and didn’t feel like Eternalmotion rolled off the tongue very well. Furthermore, the name of the continent isn’t really important. And thus, the Eternalflux Continent came to be....

Chapter 410: A Surprise For Feng Youde!

Ten days had passed since Bai Xiaochun left the Hall of Devil Slayers and the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. All of Bai Xiaochun's Dao protectors were very nervous. Although none of them really knew much about the mission he was on, after spending a significant amount of merit points, they managed to dig up more information about the Foundation Establishment cultivator he was supposed to track down and kill. What they found was that this cultivator had a fairly significant background.

They immediately tried to get in contact with Bai Xiaochun to inform him of what they had discovered, only to find that for some mysterious reason, he was impossible to reach!

Perhaps it was because of how distant the Eternalflux Continent was, or perhaps there was some other reason. In any case, he was currently out of contact.

Even as they stewed in their nervousness, Feng Youde, the Nascent Soul Daoist master who was the hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers, was sitting in a temple meditating.

By now, he had long since put everything which had occurred with the new recruits out of his mind. He didn't even care whether or not they lived or died on their missions; throughout the years, too many disciples of the Hall of Devil Slayers had died to even count.

Generally speaking, the first missions assigned to new recruits weren't very difficult, and had a high survival rate. Several days ago, he had asked Master Cloud-Dao a few perfunctory questions regarding the missions that had been assigned, and had then proceeded to focus on cultivation.

As he sat there in the temple, he suddenly realized that something in his bag of holding was flickering with bright light. Frowning, he opened his eyes and wondered who it was that had

dared to displease him by interrupting his meditation. Looking down, he used divine sense to scan a jade slip in his bag of holding, whereupon his expression flickered and his eyes widened.

He even gasped, and soon, an expression of bewilderment and incredulity could be seen on his face.

“The Heavenspan emissary is summoning me!?!?”

He only knew a bit about the Heavenspan emissary, who was a very enigmatic figure, and was said to have come from the Heavenspan Sea to stay temporarily in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Even the sect’s demigod patriarch treated the emissary with respect.

An eminently important person like that was someone the hallmaster would normally only be able to gaze at from a distance, and yet now, he was being personally summoned! Feng Youde’s normally kind-looking face was now twisted with anxiety. Not daring to tarry, he rose to his feet and hurried out of the temple he had been meditating in, transforming into a beam of light that shot up past the second level rainbows and directly toward the summit of the first level rainbow.

The entire area was sealed off by a restrictive spell, but after the spell scanned Feng Youde, he was let through. For some reason, that only caused his nervousness to mount.

The first level rainbow of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was occupied by the sect’s demigod patriarch, and more recently, by the mysterious Heavenspan emissary.

After Feng Youde was let past the defensive barrier, he didn’t dare to actually set foot onto the rainbow, and merely waited above it, hands clasped and bowing deeply.

“Feng Youde, hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers on Sky Quarter Rainbow, is here to request an audience with the Heavenspan emissary.”

Almost immediately, a blurry figure stepped out of thin air, looked Feng Youde up and down, and then led him down toward the rainbow.

Feng Youde's anxiety continued to build as the blurry figure led him to a valley filled with birdsong, the fragrance of flowers, and strong spiritual energy, as well as a pond filled with seven-colored fish swimming lazily about. Closer inspection revealed that the fish looked very much like infant dragons.

Adjacent to the pond was a log cabin, within which a figure could be seen playing a zither. The music floating up from the zither was graceful, and yet filled with a twinge of killing intent. Somehow, it affected the spiritual energy in the valley, causing vague images of wild beasts to appear, beasts that were shocking to the extreme.

Feng Youde took a deep breath, then walked forward to a position roughly 300 meters from the log cabin. At that point, the pressure weighing down on him was so intense that he didn't dare to proceed any further. Clasp hands, he bowed deeply and said, "I am Feng Youde. Greetings, Heavenspan Emissary."

His expression couldn't have been more respectful. This emissary was a person who even the demigod patriarch respected, so whether it was in terms of cultivation base or background, Feng Youde knew well that being disrespectful in even the slightest aspect wasn't an option.

After a long moment passed, the voice of a young woman drifted out from within the log cabin. "Feng Youde...."

The mere fact that she had spoken his name caused Feng Youde's expression to turn even more somber. Yet again, he bowed deeply.

"There's no need to be nervous," the young woman continued. "I called you here today because I have a task in mind for you...."

"Anything, Emissary! Whatever orders you have, I, Feng Youde, will do everything in my power to see them accomplished!" The

determination in his voice could sever nails and chop iron, and anyone who heard it would be convinced that he would go to any and all lengths to keep his word.

A moment passed, and the young woman spoke again. “You have a disciple in your Hall of Devil Slayers named Bai Xiaochun. Make sure that nothing untoward happens to him during his time on Sky Quarter Rainbow. If you keep him safe until he reaches the Nascent Soul stage and joins the parliament of elders, I will bestow upon you a bit of good fortune that will see you reach the Deva Realm!”

Feng Youde was taken aback by her words. He was a Nascent Soul cultivator and hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers. Being the wily fox that he was, he understood that in some situations, the less you knew, the safer you were.

That was especially true when it came to powerful people like the Heavenspan emissary. The less he understood about this situation, the better. Furthermore, when he heard about good fortune that would help him become a deva, his eyes immediately shone with bright light. Were any other person to make him such an offer, he wouldn’t believe it, but this was a promise from the Heavenspan emissary! As such, he completely and utterly trusted the young woman’s words!

“Deva Realm....” he murmured, eyes glittering with excitement. Of course, his desire to reach the Deva Realm was intense, but the current level of his cultivation base made it such that, although becoming a deva wasn’t impossible, it was becoming less and less likely by the day. Therefore, the words of the Heavenspan emissary couldn’t have been more enticing to him. Clasp hands, he bowed even more deeply than before.

“Fear not, Emissary. I will do exactly as you say, beyond the shadow of a doubt!!” Brimming with excitement, he turned and left, flying back toward Sky Quarter Rainbow in a beam of prismatic light.

Along the way, he couldn't stop bubbling with excitement over the thought of the good fortune which had been mentioned, and how this could very well be his lucky break. He tried to bury his excitement, and yet, it was impossible for him prevent his eyes from glittering brightly.

"I can't believe this Bai Xiaochun prompted someone so powerful to personally issue orders about him!" For some reason, the name Bai Xiaochun seemed familiar to him, but at the moment, he couldn't put a face to the name. Whoever he was, Feng Youde was already determined to take good care of him during his time in the Hall of Devil Slayers, keep him out of any sort of danger, and groom him all the way to the Nascent Soul stage.

"Hahaha! It seems my chance at the Deva Realm is just around the corner!" With that, he pushed forward with a bit more speed, quickly arriving at Sky Quarter Rainbow and the Hall of Devil Slayers.

"Send for Master Cloud-Dao immediately!" he said. There were simply too many disciples in the Hall of Devil Slayers for him to remember them all by name, and therefore, the best way to deal with them was through Master Cloud-Dao.

After all, Master Cloud-Dao was responsible for the records of all the disciples and their mission assignments. As Feng Youde's most trusted assistant, he had done a wonderful job of managing things over the years.

Just as Feng Youde was settling down in his temple, Master Cloud-Dao arrived. Fearful of keeping Feng Youde waiting, he had even used a secret magic to arrive as quickly as possible, which was why the lingering sound of sonic booms could be heard outside. After landing outside the temple, he quickly straightened up his garments, put an ingratiating smile onto his face, and hurried inside.

Upon entering, he saw that the kindly-faced Feng Youde was not

sitting in his chair at the head of the hall like he usually did. Instead, he was pacing back and forth, his expression tinged with a delight that most people would not notice. However, after working closely with him as an aide for so long, Master Cloud-Dao couldn't help but notice it.

“Greetings, Hallmaster!” Master Cloud-Dao said. Looking like the picture of a toady, he continued, “Congratulations, and please accept my most sincere felicitations! From the healthy glow on your face, disciple can tell that some momentous event has occurred!”

Upon hearing Master Cloud-Dao's words, Feng Youde laughed heartily.

“Oh you!” he said, smiling and wagging his finger. “If you spent less time working on reading faces and more time on cultivation, you might break through to the Nascent Soul stage!”

Master Cloud-Dao chuckled with the realization that he had judged the situation correctly. “Disciple—”

However, even as he prepared to offer some more flattery, Feng Youde swished his sleeve and interrupted, “Alright, that's enough with the adulation. We have a disciple in the Hall of Devil Slayers named Bai Xiaochun, right?”

Master Cloud-Dao's jaw dropped. “Huh? Bai Xiaochun?”

Chapter 411: Are You... Talking About Me?

Upon seeing Master Cloud-Dao's reaction, Feng Youde frowned, raised his voice, and said, "Well, is there?"

Unsure of why exactly Feng Youde was asking about Bai Xiaochun, Master Cloud-Dao immediately started to get nervous. Nodding his head, he said, "There is.... He was in the last group of new recruits...."

Feng Youde laughed loudly as he suddenly recalled Bai Xiaochun, and how his burst of speed had been a bit irritating. Now, however, Feng Youde's attitude was completely different. Someone very important cared about Bai Xiaochun, which meant that he obviously was not anybody ordinary.... "Oh, I remember him now. Well, go get him, no wait, go invite him to come see me. And remember to be very polite!"

"Huh?" Master Cloud-Dao said, his eyes widening and his head beginning to spin. Beads of sweat popped out on his forehead as he realized that something about the situation was definitely not right. The fact that Feng Youde had used the word 'invite' spoke volumes, and caused Master Cloud-Dao's nervousness to mount.

When Feng Youde realized that the mention of Bai Xiaochun's name caused Master Cloud-Dao to start sweating, he immediately suspected that something was going on. Gaze sharpening, he said, "Well? What are you standing around for?"

Bracing himself, Master Cloud-Dao said, "Hallmaster... Bai Xiaochun... he's... he's still out on his first mission."

Inwardly, he was cursing Li Yuansheng. The reason why Master Cloud-Dao had recognized Bai Xiaochun at first sight was because he had personally worked very hard to make sure that he ended up being recruited by the Hall of Devil Slayers.

According to the agreement he had reached with Li Yuansheng, if

he could get Bai Xiaochun killed, he would receive all sorts of rewards. This wasn't Master Cloud-Dao's first time handling such a matter. As far as he was concerned, one disciple couldn't possibly be very important in the grand scheme of things, not even a hostage. This was the Hall of Devil Slayers, and if he wanted to see someone dead, that person would definitely die.

All of a sudden, Master Cloud-Dao's heart began to pound.

"His first mission?" Feng Youde said, looking a bit surprised. Then, his gaze turned as sharp as daggers. As the hallmaster, he didn't pay much attention to the day-to-day affairs of the Hall of Devil Slayers. However, he was aware of the corruption and vice that existed within its ranks. Obviously, Bai Xiaochun must have offended someone, otherwise, Master Cloud-Dao wouldn't be reacting in such a way.

"What mission is he on?" Feng Youde said, sounding a bit displeased.

Face clinching bitterly, Master Cloud-Dao said, "He... he was sent to kill the notorious sex fiend Zuo Hengfeng...."

Feng Youde's left eyelid twitched as he glared at Master Cloud-Dao, and then spoke in the most frigid of tones, "Where exactly is this mission to be carried out? Tell me the truth!"

By this point, Master Cloud-Dao was actually quite confused, and was already furious at Li Yuansheng. Furthermore, if the hallmaster was connected to Bai Xiaochun in some way, why hadn't he said so earlier?! "In the immortal's cave of Eccentric Earthvile. Zuo... Zuo Hengfeng was recently accepted as Earthvile's new apprent--"

"What!?!?" Feng Youde exclaimed, his eyes widening in rage. Flicking his sleeve, he sent a wind screaming through the temple that instantly caused all the miscellaneous items lying about to be reduced to ash. As for Master Cloud-Dao, he began to tremble visibly.

Brimming with rage, Feng Youde yelled, “You sent Bai Xiaochun to the immortal’s cave of Eccentric Earthvile, a Nascent Soul Daoist master, to kill his apprentice!? Get him back here immediately! He shouldn’t be out doing missions!!”

He backed his words with the power of his Nascent Soul cultivation base, causing them to echo like thunder throughout the Hall of Devil Slayers.

Terrified by Feng Youde’s display of anger, Master Cloud-Dao dropped to his knees to kowtow. Nearly weeping, he said, “It’s... it’s too late. He’s been gone for ten days already. Also... um... I gave him a faulty jade slip that won’t work outside of the sect....”

“Y-you... you....” Feng Youde felt his heart go cold. It was as if he had been struck by lightning out of a blue sky, and immediately, his robes were soaked with sweat. Eccentric Earthvile was a late Nascent Soul stage expert who had gathered quite a band of rogue cultivators. Furthermore, he had certain proclivities, the mere thought of which got Feng Youde shaking with nervousness. If the Heavenspan emissary hadn’t made that special request, it might not have been a big deal, but now that she had, Feng Youde knew that if Bai Xiaochun died outside the sect, there would be severe repercussions, the extent of which he couldn’t even begin to fathom.

Then he thought about how even the demigod patriarch showed respect to the emissary, and he began to shake harder. Eyes completely bloodshot, he roared, “What have you done!?!?”

A resounding smack sounded out as Feng Youde slapped Master Cloud-Dao in the face, sending him tumbling out of the temple. Then Feng Youde shot up into the sky, where he called out in a voice that filled the entire Hall of Devil Slayers.

“Every cultivator in the Hall of Devil Slayers has ten breaths of time to assemble in the main square!

“Deploy the Devil-Slaying Battleships!!

“Activate the teleportation portal that leads to the Eternalflux Continent. Power it up as much as possible!! Immediately!!!” Everyone who heard Feng Youde’s frenzied howl was deeply shaken and didn’t dare to delay for even a moment. All of them flew over at top speed, and within the blink of an eye, over 10,000 cultivators were gathered in midair, bowing to Feng Youde.

At the same time, ten shocking battleships appeared, terrifying in appearance and pitch black in color.

And yet, things weren’t over yet. The teleportation portal leading to the Eternalflux Continent began to power up, causing intense rumbling sounds to echo out in all directions. The flurry of activity in the Hall of Devil Slayers attracted the attention of the other halls, and even the notice of the Sky Quarter peak lord on his seven-colored mountain.

However, before any of the other powerful figures in the sect could inquire about what was happening, Feng Youde led all of the more than 10,000 cultivators of the Hall of Devil Slayers onto the battleships. Then, the power of teleportation surged out, whisking them away. Of course, to teleport so many people so far and so quickly came at significant cost.

As the massive rumbling sounds echoed out, the cultivators from the other three rainbows looked over in complete shock.

“What’s happening on Sky Quarter Rainbow?”

“Was that... was that the Sky Quarter’s Hall of Devil Slayers? Considering the extent of that teleportation, they must be on their way to wipe out an entire sect!”

The cultivators on Sky Quarter Rainbow were even more astonished, including Li Yuansheng, who was suddenly struck by a very bad feeling.

Meanwhile, as the entire Hall of Devil Slayers was mobilizing and teleporting to the Eternalflux Continent, Bai Xiaochun was

cautiously making his way through that very continent. He had already decided to abandon his mission, and was currently heading back to the teleportation portal.

Considering the speed he was able to maintain, he was still about three days away from his destination. Inwardly, he was sighing, and couldn't stop wondering how he would be punished for failing to accomplish his mission.

“Well,” he encouraged himself, “no punishment could be worse than losing my poor little life.”

Even as he made his way along, he suddenly noticed three beams of light heading in his direction from off in the distance.

Within those beams were three people, one of them a young man with handsome features, holding a fan in his hand. He wore bright red robes, and looked quite stunning. However, his eyes were a bit sunken, as if from too much drinking and licentious behavior.

Flanking him were two old men, both of them in the early Core Formation stage, who looked about with cold eyes as they escorted the young man.

The small group caught sight of him in almost the same moment that he caught sight of them, and everyone seemed surprised. To run into cultivators in a wilderness like this wasn't an everyday occurrence. Bai Xiaochun was immediately on guard, and when he was able to get a good look at the young man's face, his heart began to pound.

That young man looked exactly like the image of Zuo Hengfeng in the mission jade slip!

“At last the fishy element of the mission is revealed!” Bai Xiaochun thought. “This guy is a Foundation Establishment cultivator, but he has two Core Formation experts to back him up! Dammit! I'm the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect, and not even I got an escort like that!” After blinking a few times, he

pretended that he hadn't noticed the group of three, and decided to just be on his way.

Even as he turned to leave. Zuo Hengfeng caught sight of him, and his eyes lit up. Snapping open his fan, he cooled himself a bit as a carnal smile spread out across his face.

"It's been a long time since I saw a cultivator as dainty as this one. Wow, snow-white skin, slender.... Enough to make anyone sigh in praise. There's something so fresh and pure about him! If he put on women's clothing, he would definitely be a top-rate beauty!" He laughed lightly, and his eyes began to burn with passion.

At first, Bai Xiaochun didn't respond to Zuo Hengfeng's words, but as they sank in, he suddenly got a bad feeling. Looking back, he saw the flames of passion burning in Zuo Hengfeng's eyes, and the sight caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to prickle.

That look almost made him feel like he wasn't wearing any clothing at all! It was very bizarre, to say the least. "W-what... what did you say?"

Licking his lips, Zuo Hengfeng laughed again, and then pointed at Bai Xiaochun with his fan. "Seniors, grab him! He's the perfect gift to give to my Master!"

The two Core Formation cultivators frowned slightly. They had a rough sense of Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base, and would normally avoid such a person. However, since Zuo Hengfeng said he wanted this person captured to give as a gift, they looked Bai Xiaochun over closely, and then had to admit that he perfectly suited the tastes of Eccentric Earthvile.

Eyes flickering with cold light, they began to head in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Eyes gleaming with excitement, and face slightly flushed, Zuo Hengfeng said, "Don't worry, darling, we'll have some time to

whisper sweet nothings into each other's ears at some point."

Gasping, Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he yelled, "Hey, I'm a guy!!!"

Zuo Hengfeng chuckled darkly and said, "Oh, I know. Don't worry, little boy, I have plenty to teach you. Beauties like you aren't very common out here in the wilderness!"

Even as the words left his mouth, the two Core Formation experts closed in on Bai Xiaochun with explosive speed.

Chapter 412: Xiaochun's Indignation

These two Core Formation cultivators had profound cultivation bases, and were accustomed to joining forces to cut down their enemy. Instead of attacking on their own, they split up and closed in on Bai Xiaochun from the left and right.

As they approached, the old man on the left performed an incantation gesture, causing black mist to explode out of his hand and take the form of a vicious black dragon. Despite being made of mist, it pulsed with an aura of rot, and even the air around it seemed to be decaying. At the same time, an acrid air spread out from it that caused the leaves and vegetation in the jungle below to wither up into ash. The mere sight of it caused Bai Xiaochun's pupils to constrict.

The old man on the right was equally as vicious. With each step he took through the air, red lotuses bloomed beneath his feet which, despite being illusory, were clearly part of a spell formation that was sealing down the area tight.

As the spell formation formed, the old man's eyes suddenly flickered with bizarre magical symbols that caused the atmosphere in the area to push down with incredible pressure.

"One of them uses an aura of death to rot everything around them," Bai Xiaochun thought, "and the other creates a spell formation with every step he takes...." Inwardly, he was feeling very glum. He hadn't even wanted this mission to begin with, and had even been trying to flee. He had only run into his intended target by chance. Even then, he had pretended not to recognize Zuo Hengfeng. And yet, despite all of that, Zuo Hengfeng had arrogantly put his evil intentions on full display.

That in itself was irritating to Bai Xiaochun, but even worse were the things that Zuo Hengfeng had just said out loud. Not only did Bai Xiaochun find them revolting, they caused fury to begin to

burn in his heart. The mere thought of what might happen to him if he were to be captured caused chills to run up his spine. Shouting out in rage, eyes flashing with cold light, he unleashed his murderous aura, and even as his two Core Formation opponents closed in, he chose not to retreat, but rather, to step forward.

As he advanced, he called upon the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, which spread out rapidly, causing cracking sounds to fill the air. The aura of the Frigid Adept level spread out for hundreds of meters in all directions, turning everything as cold as the dead of winter. Snowflakes even appeared in the air, causing both the Core Formation cultivators and Zuo Hengfeng to be engulfed by bitter iciness. Zuo Hengfeng's face immediately fell.

“A technique from the Dao of frigid coldness!” The two Core Formation experts' pupils constricted as the frigid qi wrapped around them. For someone to cultivate the power of frigid qi to this level, to the point where transformations manifested in heaven and earth, was something rarely seen among Core Formation cultivators.

With the exception of Bai Xiaochun, everything in the area seemed to be in the process of freezing rapidly.

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually occurred in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. As the frigid qi billowed out, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, and the rotting black dragon reached a point where it was only about three meters in front of him.

However, the black dragon couldn't move beyond that point. The frigid cold in the area caused the vicious dragon to freeze, and in the blink of an eye, it was nothing more than ice.

Ignoring it, Bai Xiaochun took another step forward, vanishing and then reappearing in front of the old man on the right. Without any pause, he clenched his hand into a fist and punched out.

A look of incredulous shock appeared on the old man's face as he staggered backward, blood spraying out of his mouth. Then he shouted, "A minor teleportation?!?!"

He wasn't the only one to react with such shock. The old man on the left gasped in astonishment.

Even as the words left the mouth of the old man on the right, Bai Xiaochun shot like lightning toward the other man, reaching out with his right hand to unleash the Throat Crushing Grasp. Simultaneously, a powerful gravitational force locked onto the man, ensuring that Bai Xiaochun reached him in the mere blink of an eye.

A sensation of deadly crisis rose up in the old man's mind, and he began to pant. Having no time for consideration, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing even more black mist to erupt out into the area, forming the image of a gigantic skeleton. As Bai Xiaochun closed in, the old man called upon the full power of his cultivation base to try to block the killing move.

The old man on the right was equally wracked with anxiety. By now, he realized that they had provoked a completely terrifying individual, and knew that if his partner died, then it would be very unlikely that he would make it out of the situation alive. Eyes completely bloodshot, he let out an urgent shout, causing the magical symbols in his eyes to shine with intense brightness. Magical symbols even swirled about on the surface of his skin as he dove through the frigid cold in the direction of Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone brightly as he gave a cold snort. Not only did he not slow down, he summoned a pair of wings, and also used the Mountain Shaking Bash to add a further burst of speed. Deafening sonic booms rang out as he passed up the old man who had been attempting to bar his path, and then slammed into the black mist which had just been summoned.

Before the black mist of rot could do a single thing to Bai

Xiaochun, his hand had pierced through it with lightning-like speed and latched onto the throat of the Core Formation cultivator.

“You....” The old man’s eyes went wide with disbelief and shock, but before he could say more than a single word, Bai Xiaochun’s hand clenched down. The old man screamed and lunged backward. The flesh was ripped out of his neck, causing blood to spray everywhere, and yet, he was a Core Formation cultivator with powerful life force, and that in and of itself didn’t kill him. He quickly backed up, his eyes shining with terror, and yet, before he could get very far, Bai Xiaochun waved his finger in his direction.

Instantly, the Renegade Dragon Horn flew out of his bag of holding, piercing through the air in a blinding flash before stabbing into the old man’s forehead and shooting through his head.

The old man’s eyes went wide as he was sent tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut before slamming into the ground below. Even in the moment before he died, his eyes were filled with incredulity, as if he couldn’t imagine how he had possibly been defeated so easily. The moment the battle began, his opponent had used a teleportation to gain the upper hand, and then completely dominated him, leaving him dead only a few breaths of time later.

In the moment of the old man’s death, his partner, the man who had used the magical symbols and spell formation, gasped. Heart pounding, he sent the magical symbols flying out of his body toward Bai Xiaochun. However, before they could get close, they all collapsed.

Incredible rumbling sounds echoed out as a massive force slammed into the old man, sending him tumbling through the air. Terror gleamed in his eyes as he spun to a stop next to Zuo Hengfeng. Without the slightest hesitation, he shot his right hand out to grab Zuo Hengfeng.

A bang rang out, and Zuo Hengfeng coughed up some blood. The passion in his eyes had already transformed into terror, leaving him rooted in place. However, that didn't stop the old man from grabbing him and fleeing in the opposite direction.

Everything happened with fluid, unnatural speed.

“Think you can leave just like that?!” Bai Xiaochun said. Then his third eye opened, and violet light burst out.

As soon as the violet light wrapped around the old man, his steps faltered, and something began to drag him backward. A look of despair appeared in his eyes as he gritted his teeth and shouted, “Get out of here, Young Lord! This guy... isn't a normal Core Formation cultivator!!”

With that, he violently shoved Zuo Hengfeng out in front of him. Blood oozed out of the corners of Zuo Hengfeng's mouth as he became a beam of light that shot away at top speed. By this point he was shaking in fear, and his heart was gripped by regret; never could he have imagined that the cultivator he chose to pick on would be someone so powerful.

“Dammit, dammit....” he muttered, shivering. He even drew on his longevity, using a blood escape art to harm himself in an attempt to gain enough speed to flee.

As he accelerated, he heard an agonized shriek from behind him, which was then cut off abruptly. That caused Zuo Hengfeng to shake even harder.

Moments ago, Bai Xiaochun had used his Heavenspan Dharma Eye to bind the second Core Formation expert. Then, a wave of his hand had sent copious amounts of frigid qi pouring into him, almost instantly transforming him into an ice statue, which dropped down to the ground below and shattered into countless pieces.

Looking at the fleeing Zuo Hengfeng, Bai Xiaochun growled,

“You! You forced me to do this!”

Thinking about Zuo Hengfeng’s licentious smile, and the way it sent shivers down his back, Bai Xiaochun planted his right foot into the ground and then pushed off. A huge crater opened up as he used the momentum to shoot forward, also drawing on his wings and the Mountain Shaking Bash. Not even Zuo Hengfeng’s blood escape art could help him evade that.

As Bai Xiaochun closed in, frigid qi spread out, and Zuo Hengfeng shook violently. Moments later, the frigid qi began to freeze his legs into place, and he started to slow down!

Then, Bai Xiaochun waved his finger, causing the frigid qi to form into numerous ice blades which instantly slashed toward Zuo Hengfeng.

“How dare you try to kill me!” he screamed. “My Master is–” However, it was at that point that the ice blades slashed him into pieces, killing him in body and soul!

Chapter 413: This Sect Treats Me Great

Bai Xiaochun truly was revolted by the situation. Gritting his teeth, he said, “Hmph! Who cares who your Master is? If I hadn’t killed you, you scoundrel, you would have eventually gotten stronger and then come for revenge. Then what? Even if you couldn’t beat me, what if you went to pick on my friends?!”

At that point, the little turtle stuck his head out of Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding.

“You know, Lord Turtle has some experience with things like this. Based on what that guy was shouting before he died, I’d guess he has a powerful Master who will show up at any moment and–”

“Shut up!” Bai Xiaochun said, looking around nervously. For some reason, he felt very unsafe at the moment, and just when he was about to head toward the teleportation portal at top speed, a thunderous howl of rage ripped through the air.

“Who killed my beloved apprentice!?!?” The words were spoken at such a high volume that a powerful wind blasted through the lands, dimming the sky and causing many of the trees down below to sway back and forth.

Bai Xiaochun’s face fell. “This is your fault, little turtle! Why’d you have to go and open your big mouth!”

Based on the terrifying nature of the words which had just been spoken, Bai Xiaochun was sure that they didn’t come from the mouth of a Core Formation cultivator, but rather, a Nascent Soul Daoist master.

The mere idea of a Nascent Soul cultivator caused his hair to stand on end. Shrieking, he drew upon all the power he possessed to flee toward the teleportation portal.

“How dare you look down on Eccentric Earthvile! And how dare you kill my beloved apprentice right outside of my very own

immortal's cave! Are you looking to die?!?!” Based on the volume, Bai Xiaochun could tell that whoever was speaking was now much closer to him.

Looking over his shoulder nervously, he saw a 3,000-meter-wide black cloud that clearly contained the power to topple mountains and drain seas. It was filled with countless vengeful souls, all of them screaming and tearing at each other with their teeth. It was a very shocking sight.

Standing on top of the cloud was an old man in a black robe, who was clearly Zuo Hengfeng's Master, Eccentric Earthvile. His hands were clasped behind his back, and his eyes flashed like lightning. His grim expression did nothing to conceal his rage, and despite the fact that he was more than 3,000 meters away, as soon as their gazes met, Bai Xiaochun felt his mind reeling and his cultivation base destabilizing.

“He's really a Nascent Soul expert!!” Tears were welling up in Bai Xiaochun's eyes, but at the same time, he couldn't help but feel that he was being falsely accused.

“I was leaving!” he thought. “He was the one who started picking on me....

“Why did the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect give me this mission anyway!? It looked like nothing more than killing someone in late Foundation Establishment, but the truth was that the despicable bastard had a Master who's a Nascent Soul expert!” Feeling more wronged than ever, he unleashed his Undying Live Forever Technique, and even sent some frigid qi roiling out to call upon his minor teleportation abilities. And yet, nothing could prevent the black cloud from catching up to him.

“Time to die!!” As the words echoed out, the black cloud began to envelop Bai Xiaochun. At the same time, a huge, 300-meter-wide hand stretched out toward him.

It was a shocking sight, and the pressure weighing down in the

area was immense, enough to lock down everything around it. The lands quaked, and the plants and vegetation down below began to wither. Bai Xiaochun also felt the life force inside of his body stirring, as if it were about to be sucked away.

The hand got closer, and in the critical moment, Bai Xiaochun screamed, unfurling his Landscape of Nine Provinces, which gave him another burst of power similar to teleportation.

In the moment that the hand was about to land on him, Bai Xiaochun vanished, reappearing a few dozen kilometers away, face completely ashen. Not bothering to even look behind him, he began to flee at top speed.

Behind him, Eccentric Earthvile stamped his foot down onto the black cloud, sending it racing toward Bai Xiaochun.

“You can’t escape!” he shouted. “Once I get my hands on you, I’ll skin you alive and turn you into a lantern!”

As he neared, Eccentric Earthvile’s right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and then he waved his finger toward the ground.

Instantly, the plants and vegetation beneath Bai Xiaochun withered, transforming into black mist which rose up into the air. In the blink of an eye, it transformed into a huge circle that resembled a sealing mark, and made it impossible for Bai Xiaochun to proceed past its borders.

Bai Xiaochun’s face fell as another enormous black hand rumbled toward him. Screaming, he once again used the Landscape of Nine Provinces.

Yet again, he vanished, but when he reappeared, he wasn’t 3,000 meters away. Instead, his path was blocked by the perimeter of the black circle that had just formed.

As soon as he was out in the open, the huge black hand once again shot toward him, causing an expression of despair to appear

on his face. Considering his pursuer was a Nascent Soul cultivator, he was incapable of fleeing.

“Do you really dare to try to kill me!?” he shouted. “I’ve got powerful people backing me up! If you dare to harm me, you’ll get killed for sure!” In response, Eccentric Earthvile simply snorted more coldly than ever and sent the black hand speeding toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Not even my turtle-wok will be able to block this....” Bai Xiaochun thought, tears leaking out of the corners of his eyes at how unfair all of this was. As soon as Zuo Hengfeng said something threatening, his Master showed up. But when Bai Xiaochun tried the same thing, nothing happened....

In that moment of critical danger, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were completely bloodshot as he prepared to throw all caution to the wind and make a final move. But then....

“How dare you, Eccentric Earthvile!!” The voice which spoke came from a distance, and seemed to be flustered on the verge of going mad.

Instantly, the huge black hand faltered, and Eccentric Earthvile turned his head, a look of complete shock in his eyes. He even gasped.

Bai Xiaochun was similarly shocked, and looked off toward the horizon, where a huge army had just appeared. Winds screamed and the lands shook as ten enormous battleships appeared, speeding toward him over the jungle.

The battleships were teeming with more than 10,000 cultivators, all of them bursting with cultivation base fluctuations. The ripples streaming out from them made heaven and earth seem as if it were an ocean covered with surging waves.

Shockingly, the prows of all ten battleships suddenly lit up with blinding light. Even as Bai Xiaochun looked on, that light

transformed into stabbing blasts of energy that shot through the air toward Eccentric Earthvile. Deafening rumbling could be heard, and all creation shook violently as the beams closed in with lightning speed.

In the blink of an eye, they were right in front of Eccentric Earthvile. Face falling, he waved his sleeve, completely ignoring Bai Xiaochun, as he hurtled backward at top speed.

Even as he fell back, rumbling sounds echoed out as the black hand shattered under the force of the light beams. The black clouds were destroyed, and as for Eccentric Earthvile, although he managed to defend himself, he was still shoved backward 3,000 meters until he slammed into the ground, opening up a massive crater.

Everything in the area shook violently, leaving Bai Xiaochun gasping in shock. Then, a figure blurred into motion off of one of the battleships, simultaneously shouting, “Eccentric Earthvile, how dare you harm one of the disciples of the Hall of Devil Slayers!!”

The voice belonged to none other than the kindly-faced Feng Youde, hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers, who suddenly appeared directly in front of Eccentric Earthvile, toward whom he unleashed a vicious palm strike.

“Are you crazy, Feng Youde?!” Eccentric Earthvile roared, falling back yet again, his face a mask of terror and confusion. As far as he was concerned, no matter what he might have done to provoke Sky Quarter’s Hall of Devil Slayers, it couldn’t possibly have elicited a response of this level!

However, even as the words left his mouth, the ten battleships once again powered up and unleashed piercing beams of light toward him. Booms rang out, and blood sprayed out of Earthvile’s mouth as he fell back anxiously. By this point, his hair was in complete disarray, and he was clearly in bad shape. One of his

arms had been ripped off, and his expression was one of both rage and frustration.

“Ten Devil-Slaying Battleships?! Y-y-you’re... y-y-you’re crazy!! How many resources did you waste to deploy them?! You paid that price just to kill me? Is it really worth it!?!?” Trembling in fear, Eccentric Earthvile unleashed all of his secret magics in his attempt to flee, and yet, his heart was gripped by despair. From what he could tell, he would most likely perish this day. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect would go to such lengths to try to kill him.

“I have to admit that dying under the volley of ten Devil-Slaying Battleships is–” It was in that moment of despair, and just when Earthvile was about to start begging for his life, that he suddenly realized something seemed off. Looking over his shoulder, he realized that Feng Youde wasn’t pursuing him.

Elated, he sped off into the distance, heart pounding with lingering fear.

Bai Xiaochun looked on in complete shock at the ten battleships, and the hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers. The impressive sight left him completely and utterly moved.

“This sect really does treat me great....” he thought, his eyes turning red with emotion. Earlier, he had harbored some suspicion about the sect, but now, in his excitement, he turned toward the hallmaster, clasped hands and bowed.

“Disciple–”

Before he could even get a single sentence out, Feng Youde rushed over nervously and asked, “Bai Xiaochun, how are you doing!?”

Chapter 414: Xiaochun, The Hall Of Devil Slayers Is Your Home

Bai Xiaochun was truly moved at how well the sect was treating him. That was especially true considering that the hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers had personally led more than 10,000 people and ten extraordinary battleships to his rescue.

The hallmaster even remembered his name! Although it was true that the more than 10,000 cultivators who had come along were all looking at him with surprise and even suspicion, it didn't stop him from crying out, "Disciple Bai Xiaochun is safe and sound!"

A smile broke out on Feng Youde's face as he amiably said, "You're not injured at all?"

Even as the words left his mouth, he looked Bai Xiaochun up and down to see if he was hurt. He even produced some medicinal pills, which he handed over.

"Take those after we get back, just in case you have any internal injuries that aren't obvious at the moment. The Hall of Devil Slayers can't have disciples like you shed either blood or tears!" Eyes shining with approval, he clasped Bai Xiaochun's shoulder.

"Bai Xiaochun, as a Core Formation cultivator, you held out for a long time against that Nascent Soul Daoist master. You've performed a great service for the Hall of Devil Slayers!" With that, he laughed heartily, causing the surrounding 10,000 or more cultivators to exchange awkward glances. Although none of them were sure exactly what services Bai Xiaochun had performed, they already had their suspicions regarding what was going on. Feng Youde truly did seem to be treating Bai Xiaochun far better than he should.

There were even some disciples who had been in the Hall of Devil Slayers for quite some time, and were very familiar with Feng

Youde. When they saw him acting in this way, their eyes went wide with surprise. Never before had they seen him treating a disciple in this way. Everyone knew that despite his kindly face, he was very narrow-minded and petty, and if he got even slightly annoyed at someone, he would treat them with the coldest of cold shoulders.

In fact, many disciples in the Hall of Devil Slayers secretly called Feng Youde “Hellgod Feng”.

However, at this moment, Hellgod Feng was treating Bai Xiaochun as gently as a spring breeze, a sight which left all of the onlookers completely shocked. Then all of them thought back to how Hellgod Feng had urgently summoned everyone, and even deployed the ten Devil-Slaying Battleships, all to save Bai Xiaochun.

“Who is this Bai Xiaochun? What kind of background does he have?!”

“What’s Bai Xiaochun’s connection to the hallmaster?”

As speculations ran through the minds of everyone present, Master Cloud-Dao was there in the crowd, trembling from head to toe. Fear and sorrow gripped his heart, and hatred for Li Yuansheng and his plots against Bai Xiaochun festered in his bones.

“Damn you, Li Yuansheng! Are you trying to get me killed or something?!?”

Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised to hear Feng Youde say that he had performed a great service for the sect. Apparently, he must have done something without realizing it. Therefore, he stuck his chest out and tried to be the picture of someone who didn’t fear death.

“These wounds are nothing,” he said in a loud voice. “Besides, all I did was kill twenty or so Gold Core cultivators and then about a

hundred Foundation Establishment experts. After that, I had a bit of a tussle with that Nascent Soul eccentric, that's all. I, Bai Xiaochun, have sworn to defend the Hall of Devil Slayers with my own life, to sacrifice everything for it if necessary. It's nothing more than duty! Compared to that, what are some trifling merit points!?"

It was with great effort that the surrounding cultivators held back from laughing out loud, and many strange expressions could be seen. Even Feng Youde had to clear his throat. His words from moments ago had been uttered with the intention of safeguarding Bai Xiaochun, and creating a good excuse to give him a large amount of merit points upon returning to the sect.

Therefore, Bai Xiaochun's exaggerated statement left Feng Youde feeling a bit awkward. Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was preparing to continue with his speech, he quickly interrupted, "Very well, let's get back to the sect!"

With that, he waved his sleeve, sending everyone back toward the teleportation portal in beams of scintillating light.

They returned to Sky Quarter Rainbow with much pomp and grandeur, and the completely unexpected trip out of the sect caused Bai Xiaochun's name to immediately become the talk of the Hall of Devil Slayers. Furthermore, the way Feng Youde treated him caused everyone to look at him with expressions of deep reverence and respect.

Everyone watched with shining eyes as Bai Xiaochun joined Feng Youde and Master Cloud-Dao in entering the main temple in the Hall of Devil Slayers. In fact, Bai Xiaochun led the way, under the approving gaze of the kindly-faced Feng Youde.

As for Master Cloud-Dao, he almost never saw any version of Feng Youde who resembled this, and it left him completely shaken and even terrified. He was well aware that he was the one at fault for provoking this near disaster.

Smiling more sincerely than ever, Feng Youde looked at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Xiaochun, you really did an excellent job today, and performed a great meritorious service for the sect. Therefore, I will take the responsibility for making the following decision: henceforth, you are completely exempt from mission duty in the Hall of Devil Slayers! From now on, you can simply focus on your cultivation!”

Bai Xiaochun had been silent the entire way back, reveling in how moved he was. For Feng Youde to say what he had just said left him even more shaken than ever.

“Hallmaster,” he said excitedly, “you’re treating me far too well.”

Off to the side, Master Cloud-Dao watched Feng Youde and Bai Xiaochun chatting, and couldn’t help but murmur bitterly to himself, “Too well? More like impossibly well....”

Feng Youde laughed loudly, and then spoke in a very kind voice, “I’m just doing what should be done. From now on, the Hall of Devil Slayers is your home! You won’t face any danger here, and can simply relax and focus on cultivation. Work hard, and you should be able to reach the Nascent Soul stage very soon!”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. For some reason, he felt well and truly blessed. However, the blessings had come very suddenly, and no matter how he thought about the matter, he couldn’t determine what meritorious service he had actually performed.

“If you ever hit any snags in your cultivation, you just come looking for me and I’ll help you out. As far as merit points go, considering the meritorious service you’ve performed, you can have access to any cultivation resources you need from the Hall of Devil Slayers!”

“Hallmaster—” Bai Xiaochun said, shivering a bit.

“Hahaha! There’s no need to look at me with that child-like expression, Xiaochun. The Hall of Devil Slayers is your home, and

as the head of the household, it's my job to treat you well. In fact, I've already taken the liberty of acquiring some medicinal pills perfect for Core Formation cultivators. Here, take them, and don't forget, the best way you can repay the kindness you've been shown is to break through to the Nascent Soul stage as quickly as possible." Smile widening, he handed a bag of holding to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun shivered again. Accepting the bag of holding, he clasped hands and bowed, then said, "Hallmaster—"

However, Feng Youde interrupted again and offered some more words of encouragement before finally dismissing Bai Xiaochun.

After Bai Xiaochun left, the smile vanished from Feng Youde's face, and he spun grimly to look at Master Cloud-Dao.

"How could you have done this, Master Cloud-Dao?!"

Master Cloud-Dao immediately flopped to the ground to kowtow, his face ashen. "Hallmaster, please forgive me...."

"It's a good thing Bai Xiaochun wasn't hurt, otherwise you would have put me in a horrendous position!" Snorting coldly, Feng Youde waved his sleeve, causing a powerful wind to wrap around Master Cloud-Dao and throw him violently out of the hall, blood spraying out of his mouth.

"If it weren't for your years of faithful service," Feng Youde continued, "I would definitely have you skinned alive! From now on, if the slightest bad thing happens to Bai Xiaochun in the Hall of Devil Slayers, I'll come looking for you to settle accounts!"

As Master Cloud-Dao staggered to a stop outside, he clasped hands, bowed, and said, "Don't worry, Hallmaster, I'll accomplish this task or die trying!"

A moment passed, and no more word came out from the temple. Master Cloud-Dao wiped the blood off of his mouth, and then turned to look in a certain direction, his eyes burning with venom,

venom directed, not toward Bai Xiaochun, but toward Li Yuansheng!

“Li Yuansheng!!” he said through gritted teeth. With that, he flew into motion, leaving the Hall of Devil Slayers and heading toward the immortal’s cave Li Yuansheng occupied when outside of his clan.

Upon arriving, he banged his fist on the main door so hard that the entire immortal’s cave shook. Li Yuansheng had been in the middle of meditating, but now his eyes snapped open, and he rushed out to find Master Cloud-Dao simmering in anger just outside.

“Brother Cloud-Dao, you–”

Before he could finish speaking Master Cloud-Dao performed an incantation gesture, causing a rift to break open in midair and rush toward Li Yuansheng. “I thought you were worth making friends with, Li Yuansheng! How could you do something so sinister!?!?”

Li Yuansheng’s jaw dropped, and he leaped backward to avoid Master Cloud-Dao’s divine ability.

“Sinister?” he said angrily. “How was I sinister?”

“You asked me to get rid of Bai Xiaochun, but it was all a setup to get me killed! Do you know who Bai Xiaochun is? Well, do you, Li Yuansheng? What did I ever do to offend you!?!?” Before Li Yuansheng could even react, Master Cloud-Dao dashed forward and launched a palm strike that struck Li Yuansheng directly in the chest.

Li Yuansheng staggered backward, blood oozing out of the corners of his mouth, eyes blazing with shock. “That’s impossible! He’s nothing but a hostage from a Middle Reaches sect! He’s only–”

“That guy is anything but ordinary. When Hallmaster Feng heard that he was in trouble, you should have seen the look on his face. He summoned 10,000 disciples and ten Devil-Slaying Battleships to

go rescue him!”

When Li Yuansheng heard this, his eyes went wide, and an exclamation of shock escaped his lips.

“How is that possible...?”

“How should I know?” Master Cloud-Dao raged. “You should have seen how badly Eccentric Earthvile was hurt!”

By this point, his hatred toward Li Yuansheng was bone-deep. However, he knew that Li Yuansheng came from a deva clan, so after venting some anger, he simply swished his sleeve and left.

Chapter 415: Who Dares To Try To Take Bai Xiaochun's Poor Little Life?!

After Master Cloud-Dao left, Li Yuansheng went back into his immortal's cave, his face ashen and yet green with fury. Blood still smeared his lips as he balled his hands into fists and growled, "Bai Xiaochun is nothing more than a hostage from a Middle Reaches sect. The River-Defying Sect is still unstable, and doesn't even have a Deva Realm cultivator yet. They could be destroyed at any moment. How could a hostage like that have anybody powerful supporting them?"

Li Yuansheng gritted his teeth and contemplated giving up on the matter. However, that seemed too bitter of a pill to swallow, especially when he thought back to the humiliation he had endured in Sky City. It only took a moment for him to lose his cool immediately. Eyes flickering with cold light, he thought, "It must have just been a coincidence. Hallmaster Feng must have had a beef with Eccentric Earthvile. There's no way that Bai Xiaochun can have somebody that powerful watching out for him!

"Since Master Cloud-Dao won't help me, I guess I'll have to handle things myself. This time, I'll make sure Bai Xiaochun knows the height of the heavens and the breadth of the earth!" Li Yuansheng pulled out a jade slip, thought for a moment, and then decided that he would call upon the resources of his clan....

A few days later, Li Yuansheng emerged from his immortal's cave, a grim expression on his face as he headed straight for the teleportation portal that led down to Sky Quarter Rainbow. His destination: the desert, and Bai Xiaochun's tavern.

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Now that Big Fatty Zhang and the other Dao protectors had been promoted, Xu Baocai was the only one who remained to lead the rest of the Azure Dragon Society. For the most part, he just

watched the merit points rolling in, and enjoyed a comfortable life.

“Ah, this is the life. I can have anything I want at the snap of a finger. Even the junior patriarch and all of them up in the rainbow district are probably jealous of me.” He was currently laying on his belly, enjoying a full body massage being performed by eight maidservants. The feeling of their warm, dainty hands caused a wide smile to spread out across his face. He even reached his arm around the waist of one of the beautiful maid servants and pulled her close.

“You’ll be keeping me warm tonight,” he said, smiling so broadly his eyes became nothing but slits.

The maidservant flushed and said, “Lord Baocai, you....”

Xu Baocai laughed heartily. Heart burning with passion, he was about to roll over when, all of a sudden, a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering noise filled his ears. In the blink of an eye, everything began shaking violently, and the roof of the tavern shuddered as if it were about to be torn off.

Instantly, numerous agonized shrieks rang out, and the entire tavern began to collapse into rubble. Screaming, Xu Baocai scrambled to safety, heart pounding with rage. Just when he was about to cry out some orders, he looked up and saw the yellow-robed Li Yuansheng floating up above in the air.

“You have the time it takes an incense stick to burn to get in touch with Bai Xiaochun and tell him to get the hell down here. If he doesn’t show up in time, then I’ll rip that property-bestowal flag right out of the ground!!” With that, Li Yuansheng waved his right hand, sending a sea of flames down to engulf the remnants of the tavern.

As the tavern began to burn, a little flag was revealed, which was none other than the flag Bai Xiaochun had received, granting him the right to personal property in Sky City.

Xu Baocai looked around with bloodshot eyes at the ruins around him, and the wailing cultivators of the Azure Dragon Society. Obviously, Li Yuansheng was trying to goad Bai Xiaochun out into the open, but at the moment, Xu Baocai couldn't think of anything else to do other than make contact with him.

Without any hesitation, he pulled out a jade slip to send a message.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was in his immortal's cave on Sky Quarter Rainbow, consuming the medicinal pills Feng Youde had given him and reveling in the feeling of his cultivation base rising. After performing some breathing exercises, he expelled some impure vital energy from his mouth, and then prepared to continue with his cultivation.

He had taken the time to contemplate the events which had played out on the Eternalflux Continent on a few occasions, but still couldn't make heads or tails of them. No matter how many explanations he came up with, none of them made much sense.

"First there was that incident with the Sky Quarter peak lord, and then Feng Youde's sudden change in attitude. What's going on here? Should I take the initiative to do a little investigating of my own?" Even as he was rubbing his chin thoughtfully, his expression flickered, and he pulled a jade slip out of his bag of holding. As soon as he sent some divine sense into it, he heard Xu Baocai wailing,

"Save us, Junior Patriarch.... Li Yuansheng is here, he burned the tavern to the ground! Lots of brothers of the Azure Dragon Society are injured....

"He said to tell you that you have the time it takes an incense stick to burn to get down here or else he'll take the property-bestowal flag! What do we do, Junior Patriarch...?"

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard this, he gasped, and his anger began to burn. "You want my flag? That's my personal property!!

You burned my tavern to the ground? Li Yuansheng, ah, Li Yuansheng. I still haven't settled accounts for the last time you plotted against me in secret, and now you try to bully me out in the open!?"

Bai Xiaochun was completely incensed. Xu Baocai had been bullied, the tavern had been destroyed, and his property-bestowal flag was being threatened. There was no other option for Bai Xiaochun than to shoot to his feet.

"You want me down in Sky City, huh? Not convenient to make a move against me on Sky Quarter Rainbow? Alright, that's exactly what I wanted anyway!" Hanging his Hall of Devil Slayers identity medallion around his neck to make sure he had no problems getting down to the city, he flew out of his immortal's cave.

"Let's go see if Li Yuansheng will dare to make a move against me when I go as a representative of the Hall of Devil Slayers! Will he dare to disrespect the hall?!" Seething with anger, he rushed over to the teleportation portal. Just before teleporting down, though, he hesitated for a moment, and then sent a quick message to Hallmaster Feng Youde. He felt much better after that, and quickly teleported down and shot toward the west district, and the desert.

Even from a distance, he could see the large crowd of cultivators gathered to look at the black smoke rising up into the air from the rubble that used to be his tavern.

Then he saw Xu Baocai and the other Azure Dragon Society cultivators huddled off to the side, ashen-faced and bleeding, and Li Yuansheng hovering in the air amidst a sea of flames, right above Bai Xiaochun's flag of property bestowal.

"Li Yuansheng," Bai Xiaochun roared, "how dare you threaten that flag of mine!" With that, he shot into the air toward Li Yuansheng, simultaneously sending frigid qi roiling out to quench the flames of the burning tavern.

As soon as Li Yuansheng looked up and saw Bai Xiaochun, a cold

smile twisted his face, and he waved his finger. In response, the air around Bai Xiaochun twisted and distorted, and numerous pulses of astonishing energy erupted out. At the same time, four figures stepped out of thin air.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell, and he stopped in place, causing the frigid qi around him to grow stronger and stronger as he looked around at the four newcomers.

They were all young men with cultivation bases in the mid Core Formation stage. Obviously, these were not like the silkpants friends Li Yuansheng had brought with him before. These four had grim expressions on their faces, and intensely murderous auras. These were true Chosen, people who were practiced killers. In addition to all of that, their handsome features were all similar in some ways, and they all wore identical green robes!

Most of the cultivators in the crowd didn't recognize them, but a few did, and immediately began to call out in shock.

“The Flashflame Four!!”

“They're definitely the Flashflame Four! They're in the top 300 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!!”

In response to the cries of shock, Bai Xiaochun frowned and looked over at the group. All of these four green-robed disciples emanated incredible pressure similar to that of Zuo Hengfeng's two Core Formation cultivator escorts.

Li Yuansheng threw his head back and laughed. Clapping hands and bowing to the Flashflame Four, he then turned his attention to Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes shone with piercing light.

“Bai Xiaochun, I don't care what happens today, I'm going to uproot your property-bestowal flag and put an end to the days of your tavern!”

With that, he let loose another stream of laughter. He had complete and utter confidence in the Flashflame Four, especially

considering that all of them were in the same cultivation level as Bai Xiaochun, the mid Core Formation stage. From what he could tell, they should have no trouble dominating Bai Xiaochun in a fight.

“In fact, I’m not just going to take your flag. I’m going to make sure you personally understand that there are certain people in the world who you can’t afford to offend!” More laughter erupted from Li Yuansheng’s mouth as he waved his hand, sending his sea of flames down to engulf what little remained of the tavern.

“Attack!” he cried. Instantly, expressions of disdain could be seen on the faces of the Flashflame Four, and they began to walk forward. As they did, shocking flames erupted out from them, to the point where they themselves almost looked like beings made from flame.

Clearly, they weren’t attempting to kill Bai Xiaochun, but they most certainly were attempting to seriously injure him.

Eyes flashing, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and shoved it out in front of him, causing the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation to erupt with power. As frigid qi began to build up in the area, he fell backward several paces, then threw his head back and roared.

“You bunch of insufferable bullies! You’re pushing things too far! Four of you ganging up on one of me? Plus you want to steal my flag and destroy my business! What’s next, you’re going to take my poor little life!?”

“Hallmaster, hurry, they’re trying to kill me!!” Bai Xiaochun let loose his words with as much power backing them as possible, causing them to echo like thunder through the entire area. Before the Flashflame Four or Li Yuansheng could react, booms filled the sky, and a huge wind kicked up. Boundless fluctuations of power roiled through all creation as a blast of energy descended from above.

An old man suddenly appeared up above, his expression grim and his eyes shining with icy coldness. As he neared, the pressure in the area mounted, causing the land to quake and leaving everyone in the area trembling.

This old man was none other than the hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers, Feng Youde!

“Who dares try to take Bai Xiaochun’s poor little life!?!?” he cried, his rage causing heaven and earth to shake violently.

Chapter 416: Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars

The voice which filled the area was backed by the might of a Nascent Soul cultivation base, and it instantly caused the faces of the Flashflame Four to fall, and their bodies to tremble. If the voice had belonged to an ordinary Nascent Soul cultivator, their reaction might not have been so extreme. After all, the entire group had extraordinary latent talent, and were also listed among the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. They were the type of people who wouldn't be fazed by ordinary Nascent Soul cultivators.

But Feng Youde was in the late Nascent Soul stage, a cultivation base level that surpassed most ordinary Nascent Soul experts, and as such, the hearts of the Flashflame Four were filled with fear.

Of course, most terrifying of all was not Feng Youde's cultivation base, but rather, his status in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. People who were capable of rising to the position of hallmaster on any of the rainbow districts were few and far between.

And even more telling was that he was the hallmaster of the Hall of Devil Slayers. Although each of the four rainbow districts had its own Hall of Devil Slayers, the cultivators from any of them were always fierce and terrifying. Very, very few people would ever dare to provoke a Nascent Soul eccentric like that, and the fact that he had shown up burning with fury left the Flashflame Four trembling in fear.

If that was the case with those four, there was little need to mention Li Yuansheng. While it was true that he was from a deva clan, and that such a clan wouldn't fear a single Nascent Soul hallmaster, Li Yuansheng was not here as a representative of his clan. He had come here of his own volition.

Not even a powerful clan like his would risk offending a hallmaster because of a conflict with a single clan member, not

even one who could potentially reach the Deva Realm one day.

Li Yuansheng understood that immediately, and therefore, was filled with terror. Inwardly, he was howling in grief, and couldn't help but think back to what Master Cloud-Dao had told him.

“How could this Bai Xiaochun have someone so powerful backing him!?!?” he thought. For the first time, Li Yuansheng regretted everything he had done, especially when he saw the trembling Flashflame Four glaring at him with venomous hatred.

Bracing himself, he clasped hands and began to speak, “Senior Feng, please, I–”

Moments before, Bai Xiaochun had been staring at Feng Youde in shock.

Despite having sent the message requesting help, he was still deeply shaken by the fact that Feng Youde had actually come in person. After all, this was not a sect affair at all, and thus, the lengths to which Feng Youde was going to watch out for him were beyond what he ever could have imagined.

Therefore, as soon as he realized Feng Youde's stance in the situation, he pointed at the Flashflame Four, and interrupted Li Yuansheng to say, “Hallmaster, these were the ones who wanted to take my poor little life. And that guy down there was trying to force me to give him my property-bestowal flag! Once that flag came out of the ground, I would be dead for sure!”

Even the Flashflame Four opened their mouths to offer some explanations.

As Feng Youde hovered there in midair, he couldn't help but feel a bit down. After receiving Bai Xiaochun's message, he had hesitated about what to do. After all, considering his status, it was completely inappropriate for him to act like Bai Xiaochun's bodyguard. But considering what the Heavenspan emissary had promised him, he had ended up gritting his teeth and intervening.

Upon arriving and seeing the Flashflame Four attacking Bai Xiaochun, he made his decision. He would help Bai Xiaochun in this situation, and do it in a way that would scare any other disciple who harbored thoughts of causing problems. That way, there would be no further such incidents in the future.

“N-no, that’s not what happened, sir!” Li Yuansheng stammered. “Senior Feng, please listen to–”

Eyes radiating coldness, Feng Youde snorted, interrupting Li Yuansheng and simultaneously waving his sleeve. Instantly, a majestic power parted the clouds and descended, transforming into a powerful attack. To the shock of Bai Xiaochun and everyone else present, that attack slammed into the Flashflame Four, causing blood to spray out of their mouths as they were violently tossed 300 meters away.

“Get the hell back to where you came from,” Feng Youde said coolly, “and focus on cultivation. From now on, don’t get involved in things like this!”

Seeing how events were unfolding, Bai Xiaochun also shouted, “Yeah, get the hell back to where you came from and focus on cultivation. From now on, don’t get involved in things like this!”

The Flashflame Four staggered to their feet, blood oozing out of their mouths. Not daring to offer even a single retort, they clasped hands, shot angry glances at Li Yuansheng, then turned and left.

Trembling, Li Yuansheng began to back up subconsciously, but before he could get very far, Feng Youde’s ice-cold gaze fell on him. Then Feng Youde waved his sleeve, sending a gale-force wind slamming into Li Yuansheng, who screamed and coughed up blood as he was thrown off into the distance.

“I don’t care how long you’ve had a grudge with Bai Xiaochun. If you insist on causing problems, then I’ll issue an order pulling you into the Hall of Devil Slayers for a bit of hardcore training.” In response, Li Yuansheng’s face became a mask of terror, and he

trembled even more than before. Not only did he have no desire to join the Hall of Devil Slayers, he was also filled with incredible regret and bitterness that Bai Xiaochun had someone so powerful watching out for him. Bowing his head, he turned to make his escape, vowing to never cause problems for Bai Xiaochun ever again.

Bai Xiaochun could see how scared he was at the threat, and therefore, couldn't hold back from excitedly yelling, "That's right, Li Yuansheng! If you ever provoke me again, you can come join me in the Hall of Devil Slayers! Hey, where are you going? Hold on a second, you destroyed my tavern! You owe me!"

Heart dripping with blood, Li Yuansheng gritted his teeth and threw a bag of holding out behind him before scurrying off into the distance.

Delighted that everything had been resolved, Bai Xiaochun looked up at Feng Youde, then clasped hands and bowed.

"Many thanks, Hallmaster!"

Feng Youde looked down at Bai Xiaochun, cleared his throat, and offered a few words of encouragement. Then he turned and left. The sensation of having been summoned by another person left him feeling very unsettled.

After Feng Youde left, Xu Baocai and the other Azure Dragon Society cultivators turned to look at Bai Xiaochun as if he were some sort of god. Never could they have imagined that their moment of deadly crisis would have been resolved in such a way.

The mere wave of his hand summoned a Nascent Soul cultivator, something that left everyone shaken, including all of the cultivators who had come to watch the show.

Under the glowing eyes of all present, Bai Xiaochun strutted over to Xu Baocai and the others, puffed his chest out, and handed over a sizeable sum of merit points. Eyes sparkling, he then made his

way proudly back to Sky Quarter Rainbow and his immortal's cave.

"I can't believe I'm so important to him," he thought. "He actually came when I summoned him, and unwillingly at that, from the look on his face. Actually, the Sky Quarter peak lord also had the same look on his face back when I saw him...."

"Has someone forced them to watch out for me? But who?"

Time passed. An entire month flew by. During that time, Li Yuansheng didn't cause any trouble for Bai Xiaochun, nor did the Hall of Devil Slayers assign him any missions.

Whenever he went to visit the Hall of Devil Slayers, if he saw something he liked, he would take it on credit. The only exception were certain extremely rare and precious items which were only made available to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars.

Bai Xiaochun didn't pay too much attention to those things. Life was good, and his cultivation base was slowly progressing.

Eventually, he came to realize that if he wanted to cultivate his Living Mountain Incantation on the second-level rainbow, all he needed to do was buy a certain type of command medallion from the Hall of Devil Slayers, which acted as a single-use pass. Considering that they weren't very expensive, he bought several.

Of the second-level rainbows, the one on the left was for the deva patriarch, whereas the one on the right was for the sect leader.

That rainbow was also known by the name Myriad Star Rainbow.

Myriad Star Rainbow was also the location of various unique locations for training and trials by fire, which were accessible to disciples who possessed the requisite command medallions.

There was a reason for Myriad Star Rainbow's name, and that was because it was also where the list of cultivators in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars was on display. Cultivators like that were the type who could shake the entire eastern cultivation

world!

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars list was quite eye-catching; it took up roughly thirty percent of Myriad Star Rainbow, upon which could be seen a collection of numerous glittering stars.

The stars were distributed among the various seven colors of the rainbow, most of them being in the red portion; those were so densely packed that they were impossible to count. After that, the numbers were distributed as such: orange, tens of thousands; yellow, thousands; green, a single thousand; cyan, four or five hundred; blue, a bit over a hundred. The fewest stars were in the violet section, where only eight were visible!

Each of those colors represented a different trial by fire, and as for the stars, they stood for different Chosen!

Only those who qualified to be on this rainbow were considered to be Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. Of course, many, many cultivators didn't qualify, and as such, anyone who could get onto that list was the subject of much envy on the part of others, and would instantly be quite well-known.

Furthermore, in order to foster this trend, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's grand spell formation had a special function; a disciple who looked closely at any of those stars would suddenly find the name of that particular Chosen floating in their mind.

Because of that, countless disciples in the sect were completely and utterly determined to become one of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars.

Once their name was on that rainbow, their names would be able to completely shake heaven and earth. Of course, only cultivators under the Nascent Soul stage could be Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!

Chapter 417: The Ravine of Endless Mountains

Bai Xiaochun was currently in line at the teleportation portal which led to Myriad Star Rainbow. Since he had time to spare, he looked up at the three sections of the rainbow up above. Recently, he had spent a bit of time getting more familiar with the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars arrangement.

Those who qualified to be listed as stars on that rainbow were true Chosen who received special treatment from the sect, and access to resources far beyond what was available to ordinary disciples. There were even special items that could only be purchased on Myriad Star Rainbow, and only by those on the list.

Bai Xiaochun had recently learned that the trials by fire in the seven layers of the rainbow were all very dangerous, and that every year, disciples ended up dying within them.

“Those trials by fire seem really dangerous,” Bai Xiaochun thought. “I really don’t get why so many people want to participate in all that fighting and stuff.”

And yet, there was never a shortage of disciples willing to take on the challenge.

One of the reasons had to do with the incredible rewards available once someone got onto the list. Of course, there were also prizes that were awarded for simply getting on the list to begin with, such as merit points and various rare items.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the different colors of the rainbow, and eventually his eyes came to rest on the top level, the violet one, and the eight stars which rested there. Those stars were the highest of them all, and when Bai Xiaochun realized that everyone seemed to be staring at them, he couldn’t help but be skeptical.

“Let’s see who’s in first place....” He looked up at the highest star

in the violet section of the rainbow, and a moment later, a name appeared in his mind.

“Zhao Tianjiao!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide. He had never seen someone with a name like this before, which literally meant “Chosen.” It was a very domineering name, and yet, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but tartly mutter to himself, “Not as good as my name....”

Next, he looked at the second star on the rainbow, and moments later, another name appeared in his mind. This one was obviously a Daoist name.

“Heretic!” Bai Xiaochun gasped, and yet again, felt a bit annoyed. “What kind of a crappy name is that? Heretic schmeretic....”

With that, he moved on to the third name.

“Chen Yueshan....” It was obvious at a glance that this name belonged to a female cultivator. Just as Bai Xiaochun was about to continue down the list, people started pushing him from behind. The area around the Myriad Star Rainbow teleportation portal was usually quite crowded, so people weren’t happy about someone blocking the way.

Looking away from the rainbow, Bai Xiaochun proceeded along in line until he reached the teleportation portal. After vanishing, he reappeared on Myriad Star Rainbow.

This was his first time here, but he had come well-prepared. He had acquired a map of the place in the Hall of Devil Slayers, and after confirming his location on it, he flew up into the air.

There were cultivators everywhere, most of them having come from the third level rainbows either to practice cultivation or to attempt to get into the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars.

“This place is pretty busy!” Bai Xiaochun thought in surprise. It was a lot louder here than on Sky Quarter Rainbow. Bai Xiaochun even spotted some vendor stalls which had been set up by disciples

to peddle various items. Such stalls seemed very popular.

As for the locations set aside for special types of cultivation, almost all of them had lines of disciples waiting to enter. Some of those lines had hundreds of disciples in them, which was definitely something new to Bai Xiaochun. As he made his way along, he eventually reached the special location set aside for cultivating the Living Mountain Incantation.

It was a desolate, weed-choked ravine, next to the entrance of which was a greenish-black boulder. Sitting on top of the boulder was a gaunt middle-aged man with a jaw that jutted out like an ape's. His skin was so tan it was almost black, and from a distance, he almost looked like a monkey wearing human clothing.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and couldn't help but stare a bit at the odd-looking man. Clearly, he was a Core Formation cultivator, and yet there was something about him that made him seem extremely powerful, something that Bai Xiaochun couldn't quite put his finger on. It was almost as if there was some terrifying energy in him that was somehow impossible to release into the open.

And yet, Bai Xiaochun had the distinct premonition that if this man actually attacked someone, that power would indeed erupt, and when it did, it might even be enough to fight someone in the Nascent Soul stage.

"The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect really is a terrifying place...." he thought. "Even the random guards are completely spine-tingling." At that point, Bai Xiaochun looked around and realized how cold and desolate this place was. Nobody was lined up to get in, and after a moment, he even wondered if he had somehow lost his way and was in the wrong place. However, after double-checking his map, he was certain that he was in the right place.

As he stood there, the man on the boulder suddenly opened his eyes and spoke in a grating, ear-piercing voice. "The Valley of

Floating Flowers is on the right. The Peak of Green Cliffs is to the left. The Pool of Emerald Waters is behind me. And up ahead is the Crag of Martial Sealing.”

“Um, thanks, Elder Brother,” Bai Xiaochun replied, “but I’m actually on my way to the Ravine of Endless Mountains.”

“Really?” the man said, looking a bit shocked. After looking Bai Xiaochun up and down, his eyes suddenly sparkled.

“You cultivate the Living Mountain Incantation?”

Bai Xiaochun immediately nodded.

The man chuckled, and the look in his eyes softened. With that, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waved his finger at the adjacent ravine. Instantly, the ravine trembled, and then began to ripple and distort. Suddenly, an enormous stone hand stretched out from the valley, over 30 meters wide. Apparently, the hand was waiting for Bai Xiaochun to step onto it.

The man looked back at Bai Xiaochun and said, “It’s been a long time since anyone cultivated the Living Mountain Incantation.

“It is not a technique, but rather, a divine ability focused on becoming a human mountain, and thus having access to unlimited power. It is divided into four levels, those levels being the Mortal Mountain, the Earth Mountain, the Heaven Mountain, and finally, the ultimate level... the Immortal Mountain!

“The key to this type of cultivation is the mountain meld. After all, mountains have spirits, and in this ravine you will find countless mountains. Find one with whom you are connected by destiny, and then gain enlightenment of that mountain’s spirit. If you succeed, you can unleash the power of the Living Mountain!” The man waved his finger, and a deafening roar filled Bai Xiaochun’s ears as more information about the Living Mountain Incantation poured into his mind.

Expression somber, Bai Xiaochun clasped hands and bowed deeply to the man.

“Many thanks for your help, Elder Brother. Might I request to know your honored name?”

“You can just call me... Stonemountain!”

Stonemountain smiled faintly and then closed his eyes and went back to meditating, looking very much like a stone monkey.

Bai Xiaochun once again bowed, then took a deep breath and hopped onto the huge stone hand which had stretched out from inside the ravine. As soon as he did, the hand closed into a fist around him, then pulled him into the ravine. Moments later, the hand began to fade away, and as it did, the ripples that had appeared moments ago faded away, and the ravine looked as desolate as it always had.

Bai Xiaochun's vision swam a bit, and rumbling echoed in his ears. However, all of that soon faded away, and when he could see clearly, he realized to his shock that he was in a completely unfamiliar world.

The sky was a bluish-green color, and down below... was a boundless sea of clouds, with countless mountain peaks poking up through them. To see so many mountain peaks stretching as far as the eye could see was indeed very shocking.

“The Ravine of Endless Mountains....” he thought, shaken. After flying around a bit, he did just as Stonemountain had said and began to search for a mountain that was connected to him by destiny.

“How am I supposed to know if we're connected by destiny, though?” he murmured to himself, feeling a bit confused. “Do I just find a mountain that looks good to me?”

As he flew along over the sea of clouds, he looked this way and that for an eye-catching mountain.

As Bai Xiaochun flew along through the Ravine of Endless Mountains, outside on Sky Quarter Rainbow, Song Que was sitting cross-legged in his immortal's cave, his eyes shining brightly.

“Finally.... I've finally reached the moment of Core Formation!” Currently, he had numerous spell formations set up around him, and had already notified his hall of what he was doing. He had also procured some medicinal pills designed specifically for Core Formation. Popping one into his mouth, he closed his eyes and prepared to make his breakthrough.

Half a month after Song Que, Chen Manyao also began to break through to Core Formation!

Two days after that, Master God-Diviner... also started to make his breakthrough!

Other than Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai, all of the Dao protectors who had followed Bai Xiaochun to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect were making their attempts to break through to Core Formation.

The three in that group had already made extensive preparations. Combined with the fact that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was a riversource sect with abundant spiritual energy, it made it much easier for them to attempt their breakthroughs. As for Chen Manyao and Master God-Diviner, the vast amount of merit points at the disposal of the Azure Dragon Society also had something to do with it.

As for Big Fatty Zhang, he couldn't come close to the others in terms of preparations, but Bai Xiaochun had been sure to take care of him, and had set aside plenty of merit points for him to use. As such, his cultivation base had now reached the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

That meant that for him, Core Formation was just around the corner!

Chapter 418: All Mountains Have Spirits

As Bai Xiaochun's Dao protectors went into secluded meditation to attempt to break through from the Foundation Establishment stage, Bai Xiaochun was flying around in the Ravine of Endless Mountains, looking for a mountain that was connected to him by destiny.

"Just which of these mountains is destined for me?!" he thought, frustrated. There were countless mountains within this world of clouds, and although most of them looked impressive, none of them seemed to be connected to him by destiny.

Bai Xiaochun was not sure what to do, and just kept flying around aimlessly. He wasn't even sure how much time had passed. Just when he was about to randomly select a mountain to try out, he caught sight of a very unique mountain off in the sea of clouds, and a tremor passed through him.

This mountain actually looked less like a mountain and more like a statue! It depicted a giant, kneeling down on one knee, right hand outstretched as if to grasp at the sky. The facial features were worn down and not possible to identify, but there was something in the statue's eyes that left Bai Xiaochun completely shaken.

He was almost sure he could hear a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering roar echoing in his ears, and could almost see that enormous giant trying to rip open the heavens.

"Looks kind of like the Blood Ancestor!" he thought. As he flew nearer to the mountain, he realized that a shocking pressure was weighing down on him, a pressure that left him trembling and shaking.

Instantly, his eyes began to shine brightly.

"Could it be that this mountain is the one connected to me by destiny? If it wasn't, then why did I start to feel pressure after

looking at it? That proves that it's connected to me by destiny, right?!" Excited, he continued to fly closer to the statue.

It was in that moment that the little turtle suddenly stuck his head out of Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding and disdainfully murmured, "Destiny? Yeah right. This statue is in the middle of this dimension; anybody who reached this point would feel pressure, as long as they were alive. Don't let your imagination run wild, Little Bai."

"You shut up!" Bai Xiaochun barked angrily. Ignoring the little turtle, he flew closer to the statue until he was able to alight onto its open hand. At this point, he felt more than ever that the statue was similar to the Blood Ancestor, so he quickly sat down cross-legged to meditate.

"This statue and I are definitely connected by destiny. Definitely!" With that, he proceeded to cultivate the Living Mountain Incantation with complete and utter determination.

The following day, he opened his eyes and was depressed to find that despite having spent the entire time trying to meld with the mountain, there had been no reaction whatsoever.

"All mountains have spirits...." he thought, shaking his head. With that, he closed his eyes and spent another three days trying to solve the mystery. However, the only result was that he got more depressed.

"Does it really have a spirit?" he thought. "I don't feel anything...." He thought a bit more to try to come up with some more ideas, and then closed his eyes to try again. Time passed. At a certain point, he lost track of how many attempts he had made, and yet despite all that, he hadn't provoked a single reaction from the statue. However, thanks to his unswerving determination, he eventually began to notice some trends, and soon, something like varying layers of fluctuations appeared in his mind.

However, that didn't solve the problem completely, so Bai

Xiaochun gritted his teeth even harder and continued to work.

Two months later, Song Que emerged from his secluded meditation facilities on Sky Quarter Rainbow, accompanied by thunderous rumbling. At the same time, a Core Formation aura roiled out in all directions, causing the clouds to swirl about, and attracting much attention from people in the area.

A screaming whistle rang out as Song Que flew up into the air, eyes sparkling like the stars, body shining like a treasure. The cultivation base power rippling out from him, the Core Formation pressure, was enough to rip apart heaven and earth!

Eight crystallized spiritual seas now existed inside of him, which had formed together into an Earth Core!

An Earth Core formed from eight spiritual seas gave him power and might that made him one of the most powerful among Core Formation experts.

“This is the day that I’ve been waiting for! At long last. Core Formation!” Song Que threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“Bai Xiaochun,” he declared excitedly, “I’ll be passing you up in no time!” Eyes shining with anticipation, he flew back into his immortal’s cave to stabilize his cultivation base.

Not long after Song Que reached Core Formation, Chen Manyao and Master God-Diviner also succeeded. If this event had occurred back in the River-Defying Sect, it would have attracted quite a bit of attention, but in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, Core Formation cultivators were relatively common. Of course, that made sense considering how large the sect was, and how it controlled all of the eastern cultivation world.

It was a sect where all sorts of powerful experts gathered, and as such, trifling Core Formation cultivators weren’t anything that people would pay much attention to. Only after reaching the

Nascent Soul stage could one be considered strong enough to dominate any other location in the eastern cultivation world.

Despite the fact that reaching Core Formation wasn't a very big deal in this sect, Master God-Diviner and Chen Manyao were both very excited.

Meanwhile, back in the Ravine of Endless Mountains, Bai Xiaochun was dejectedly continuing his work atop the enormous statue.

“How come it isn't working!?!?” Another half a month went by, and Bai Xiaochun was on the verge of mental collapse. Up to this point, all efforts to meld with the mountain had ended in failure, and the only headway he'd made was in being able to sense the mountain spirit inside of it.

“At this rate, it's going to take over a hundred years to get this right!” Bai Xiaochun was on the verge of going mad. After arriving in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he had done a bit of investigating, and knew that the Living Mountain Incantation was one of the sect's 300 secret magics. Not only that, it was actually listed within the top 10. From ancient times until now, only a few people had ever succeeded in cultivating it, from which its difficulty could be seen. Although some people succeeded at it almost right away, there were others who never succeeded even in an entire lifetime.

“Ah forget it. This is too hard.” Depressed, he rose to his feet, looked down at the statue-like mountain beneath his feet, and then gave a slight harrumph.

“Well, even if I can't use this Living Mountain Incantation, it doesn't matter. I still have my Waterswamp Kingdom and the powers of gravity and repulsion!” When it came to the magic of gravity and repulsion, his extensive research had led his cultivation to the point where he could form small spheres that contained the powers of gravity and repulsion. Based on what he

could tell, it wouldn't be very long before he had complete control over that magic.

As far as his Waterswamp Kingdom went, that was one of his trump cards, something he wouldn't use unless absolutely necessary.

Still feeling a bit disgruntled, Bai Xiaochun stepped off of the mountain into the air. With a final look at the statue, he sighed and began to make his way off into the distance.

Before long, he was out of the Ravine of Endless Mountains. As soon as that enormous hand placed him outside of the mirror-like entrance, he looked over at Stonemountain, who sat there looking like a statue of a monkey, in exactly the same posture as he had when Bai Xiaochun entered the ravine months before.

But then, Stonemountain opened an eye and looked over at Bai Xiaochun. "Nobody has ever succeeded at melding with the mountain on their first attempt. Even people with exceptional latent talent usually need ten tries.

"To meld with the mountain, first forget yourself, then forget the mountain. When you wake up, you will be the mountain, and the mountain will be you...."

Bai Xiaochun stopped in place for a moment, thought about what Stonemountain had just said, then nodded. Clasp hands, he bowed and then made his way off. Back in his immortal's cave, he sat down cross-legged and meditated for a bit longer on what he'd just been told.

Before long, he opened his eyes, and they sparkled brightly.

"Core Formation!?"

Before long, a beam of light pierced through the sky toward him, transforming into a young woman with spectacularly beautiful features, and a yellow robe that completely complemented her figure in every way.

“Hello, Elder Brother Bai.” She was none other than Chen Manyao. Smiling charmingly, she landed outside of Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave and was just about to say some more words when the door opened and Bai Xiaochun stepped out. Clicking his tongue, he circled around her and looked her up and down.

Face flushing, she pouted playfully and said, “What are you doing, Elder Brother Bai?!”

Sounding slightly flirtatious, he looked away and said, “It’s been a few months since we last saw each other, wife. Congratulations on reaching Core Formation!”

Back in Sky City, Chen Manyao had taken to calling herself Bai Xiaochun’s “wife” during the time that she coveted his merit points. However, to hear him use this term now caused the flush on her face to grow deeper. Eyes sparkling with a seductive gleam, she stepped closer to him.

“Elder Brother Bai,” she said softly, her breath caressing his cheeks, “as long as you promise me one thing, then you can do anything you want to me.”

“What one thing?” Bai Xiaochun coughed dryly, eyeing some of Chen Manyao’s more prominent curves.

“Simple. Just join us in the–”

“Save your breath!” he interrupted, shaking his head. This was not Chen Manyao’s first time bringing up this subject. Back in Sky City, she had hinted on numerous occasions that he should join the Wildlanders, but he had always refused.

“The sects of the Heavenspan River are the orthodox ones,” he said proudly, “and you Wildlanders are the renegades. I, Bai Xiaochun, am from a famous orthodox sect, and am backed by entities so powerful even I don’t know who they are. How could I possibly join a bunch of traitors?” Of course, he had only learned the details of such matters from Chen Manyao herself. However,

after much thought, he had thought the matter through clearly, and decided that joining forces with the renegades would be risking his poor little life.

“Maybe one day you’ll change your mind.” Chen Manyao said with a slight smile, as if she didn’t mind at all that he’d refused her. With that, she changed the topic.

“Oh right. Elder Brother Bai, the reason I came here today is that I have some clues regarding Du Lingfei....”

Chapter 419: Respect The Rank

Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked at Chen Manyao with glistening eyes.

Chen Manyao covered her mouth as she laughed lightly, her eyes sparkling with charm. Seeing how much Bai Xiaochun was interested in such news, she didn't beat around the bush.

"Based on a comprehensive investigation I carried out, I am sure that, despite not knowing Du Lingfei's exact current location... she is definitely in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!"

Although Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything, his eyes continued to glitter brightly.

"The things I've promised to do for you, I will do," Chen Manyao said. "I'll continue to investigate, and when I get some more specific information, I'll tell you immediately. Just keep in mind that Du Lingfei is likely already aware of your presence here." Giving Bai Xiaochun one last look, she turned and left.

Bai Xiaochun stood at the entrance of his immortal's cave for some time after Chen Manyao left, looking at the setting sun on the horizon, at the spreading shadows of evening, and at the majestic golden sea spreading out as far as the eye could see. At the same time, he thought back to many memories of the past.

Two hours later, he took a deep breath, settled his heart, and walked back into his immortal's cave to meditate. By now, he was not as stubbornly attached to learning the truth about Du Lingfei as he had been years ago.

A few days later, though, he was still feeling somewhat unsettled. Not only was the matter of Du Lingfei still eating at him, but his troubles with the Living Mountain Incantation were continuing to frustrate him, and he couldn't stop thinking about what Stonemountain had said.

“Forget myself, forget the mountain. When I wake up... I will be the mountain, and the mountain will be me....” Bai Xiaochun frowned. Although he understood the words in general, it was the word ‘forget’ that was obviously the most important part.

Of course, it was easy to talk about forgetting something, but to actually do so was another matter, and at the moment, Bai Xiaochun had no idea how to go about doing it.

“How do I forget...?” he murmured anxiously. “Go into a trance? The mnemonic doesn’t specifically say anything about going into a trance.... I wish there was some way you could just say forget and then instantly forget! That would be perfect.” Almost as soon as the words escaped his lips, he suddenly froze in place, his eyes shining with a strange light.

“Say forget and then instantly forget....” He licked his lips, eyes sparkling as he thought back to his own Fantasy Pill, which, upon being consumed, placed one into a hallucination in which one forgot about reality.

“That’s right!” He smacked his thigh excitedly, then rose to his feet and started pacing back and forth in his immortal’s cave. After spending much time in thought, he produced one of his Fantasy Pills and looked it over carefully. After a moment, his brow furrowed as he thought of the very strange expressions that appeared on the faces of cultivators who took the pill, and then started to worry that he would look like them if he consumed it.

“No, that won’t do. Since I’m going to consume it myself, I need to be much more careful. I need to adjust the formula to suit me specifically.” After spending some more time in thought, he hurried out of his immortal’s cave to the Hall of Devil Slayers to get some necessary ingredients.

When the disciple in charge of the supply depot saw Bai Xiaochun coming, he smiled and then respectfully bowed in greeting. Bai Xiaochun visited the Hall of Devil Slayers quite often to acquire

items he needed, much of which he purchased on credit. It was an arrangement the likes of which had never occurred in the Hall of Devil Slayers, and as a result, he was very famous.

“I need to re-concoct this pill. I need a pill designed for me, something that’s not dangerous at all. Say forget and then instantly forget, say wake up and then instantly wake up. That’s the pill I need!” The more he thought about it, the more it made sense. Therefore, he produced a huge sum of merit points to acquire the medicinal plants he needed, all of which were very rare.

As he browsed through the available items, he suddenly saw one particular spirit plant that had no flower, but instead, seven leaves, each one a different color.

Almost immediately, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes lit up, and he gasped.

“Seven-colored mistysea grass!!” Back in the Spirit Stream Sect, he had read some information about seven-colored mistysea grass on a jade slip. It was a spirit plant known to emit a hallucinatory mist that could be used in psychedelic medicinal pills. Not only was it unusually effective, but it had absolutely no harmful side-effects.

“Give me some of those!” he said excitedly, pointing at the seven-colored mistysea grass.

“Elder Brother Bai, the sect limits the sale of this type of medicinal plant. Only people in the top 1,000 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars can buy it.”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, his jaw dropping. After hesitating for a moment, he still couldn’t suppress his excitement about the plant, and immediately flew toward the main temple in the Hall of Devil Slayers.

Along the way, numerous disciples of the Hall of Devil Slayers cast respectful glances in his direction. Normally when he came

here, he would strut around and show off a bit, but now, he was simply too excited, and rushed directly toward the temple.

“Hallmaster,” he cried out before even arriving, “it’s me, Bai Xiaochun. May I request an audience?” Master Cloud-Dao was standing guard outside the temple, and when he saw Bai Xiaochun coming, he smiled and did nothing to block his path, allowing him to enter directly into the temple.

Feng Youde was sitting at the end of the temple, meditating. However, as soon as Bai Xiaochun hurried in, his eyes opened.

Forcing a smile onto his face, he said, “How can I help you, Xiaochun...?”

Recently, Bai Xiaochun had been in the Ravine of Endless Mountains, leaving the Hall of Devil Slayers much quieter. Before that, he had always come over with one issue or another to annoy Feng Youde.

“Hallmaster,” Bai Xiaochun said anxiously, “I really need some seven-colored mistysea grass. Do you happen to have any? Can I have a few stalks...?”

Feng Youde pulled out a jade slip to check how much seven-colored mistysea grass was in the Hall of Devil Slayers. After a moment, his face twitched; although seven-colored mistysea grass wasn’t a very rare plant, there wasn’t a big supply on hand. The Hall of Devil Slayers only had three stalks. Furthermore, considering the hallucinatory effects of the plant, it could only be safely handled by cultivators with a relatively high cultivation base. As such, the sect had put limitations on how it could be distributed.

Feng Youde sighed and said, “Ah, this isn’t a big deal. Just go find someone in the top 1,000 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, and have them buy it for you.”

As of this point, he really felt like he had become Bai Xiaochun’s

Dao protector. Suppressing the gloomy feeling which had risen up in his heart, he raised his voice and he said, “Master Cloud-Dao, could you please handle this?”

Master Cloud-Dao nodded in assent and hurried over.

Bai Xiaochun was immediately moved. His entire purpose in coming here was to seek help from Feng Youde in getting someone from the top 1,000 to buy the plants for him. Throwing his arm over Master Cloud-Dao’s shoulder, Bai Xiaochun quickly led him out of the hall.

“Junior Brother Bai,” Master Cloud-Dao said quickly, “the Hall of Devil Slayers only has a few dozen disciples in the top 1,000. All of them are Chosen, obviously, and are a proud and arrogant lot. Obviously, any of them who agree to help you will expect some sort of compensation in return.” Master Cloud-Dao did nothing to hide the truth from Bai Xiaochun. As the honor guard of the Hall of Devil Slayers, not only did he wish to avoid offending Bai Xiaochun, he also sought to avoid provoking those who were in the top 1,000.

“No problem!” Bai Xiaochun said, waving his sleeve. If there was one thing he had a lot of, it was merit points. Filled with zest, he hurried along after Master Cloud-Dao toward a distant immortal’s cave.

Upon reaching a certain distance, Master Cloud-Dao stopped to offer an explanation. “This is the immortal’s cave of Junior Brother Zhou. He’s already in the late Core Formation stage, despite not being even a hundred years old. He reached the green portion of the rainbow, earning a rank of 777 in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!

“Junior Brother Zhou is a true Chosen, and is very famous in the Hall of Devil Slayers. He also has a lot of followers among the lower-ranking disciples. Let’s go pay him a visit. Remember to be very courteous, and definitely don’t say anything to offend him.”

Master Cloud-Dao offered a few more exhortations along these lines, and Bai Xiaochun nodded in agreement the whole time. He knew that when going to ask for help, one had to be on their best behavior.

Before the two of them could even get close to the door, three cultivators rushed forward to block their path. These three cultivators had profound cultivation bases, but once they saw that it was Master Cloud-Dao approaching, they stepped aside. However, after reaching the door, no amount of calling out on the part of Master Cloud-Dao provoked even the slightest response.

“I guess Junior Brother Zhou isn’t home....” Master Cloud-Dao said a bit awkwardly.

Bai Xiaochun frowned and then opened his third eye a tiny slit. Instantly, he could see inside of the immortal’s cave. Reclining on a divan was a young man being waited upon by several maid servants. A look of scorn could be seen on his face as he blatantly ignored Bai Xiaochun and Master Cloud-Dao.

“Don’t worry, Junior Brother Bai, let’s just move on. Next is the immortal’s cave belonging to Junior Brother Chen. He’s a friend of mine, so he should be able to help out with a small matter like this.” Bai Xiaochun was starting to get a bit depressed, but he followed Master Cloud-Dao along to a second immortal’s cave.

Apparently, Master Cloud-Dao really was friends with this Junior Brother Chen, who immediately opened the door and allowed them in. However, despite the fact that he didn’t treat them coldly, neither did he treat them with much warmth. After Master Cloud-Dao explained the situation, Junior Brother Chen looked over coolly at Bai Xiaochun and said, “I’ll handle it after my current session of secluded meditation.”

“Many thanks, Elder Brother Chen!” Bai Xiaochun said quickly. “By the way, how long is your—”

“At the soonest, two years. Perhaps as much as five.” Looking a

bit impatient, he waved them out of his immortal's cave.

Chapter 420: You Look Down On Me!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened into a glare, and if it weren't for the fact that Master Cloud-Dao was pulling him away, he would almost certainly have begun arguing with the cultivator named Chen, who looked on coldly as the two of them left the cave.

Then, a loud bang could be heard as the door slammed shut. Moments later, a cold voice echoed out from inside the cave. "Can't wait? Go challenge the trials yourself then!"

"Fine!" Bai Xiaochun barked back angrily. "What's so amazing about getting into the top 1,000 anyway? If you don't want to help, so be it, but there's no need to be such a jerk about it!"

Master Cloud-Dao smiled bitterly and quickly tried to comfort Bai Xiaochun. "Calm down, Junior Brother Bai." He shook his head. "Ai. Look, all of the people in the top 1,000 are top Chosen! They're not the type of people we can just tell what to do. The sect views them all as important future figures, especially those who are in the top few hundred in the rankings. For example, I heard that not too long ago, Sima Feiru occupied an entire cultivation district and wouldn't let anyone enter. It caused quite a disturbance, but in the end, nothing was done about it. Nobody wanted to risk offending him."

Bai Xiaochun had heard of this Sima Feiru, and knew that he ranked somewhere in the 90's. He was a spectacular and domineering Chosen, not from the Hall of Devil Slayers, but rather, from the Hall of the Sect Sanctum.

Next, it was to Bai Xiaochun's sorrow that Master Cloud-Dao led him to the third location, and then the fourth....

Of the few dozen cultivators in the Hall of Devil Slayers who were in the top 1,000, most were currently in secluded meditation, and others were away. As the day passed, not a single Chosen paid any attention to Bai Xiaochun and Master Cloud-Dao. The two of them

were either ignored or outright rejected. Although different expressions could be seen on the faces of the various Chosen, none of them could hide the arrogance that seeped out from their very bones. Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been more irritated.

“They're as arrogant as spirit tail chickens!” By now it was evening, and Bai Xiaochun was both furious and humiliated at how this seemingly inconsequential task had gone. In fact, he even felt the impulse to simply go try to get into the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars.

“Junior Brother Bai, ai, look there's still one more left. He's more reasonable than the others, we should definitely be able to succeed!! Don't get angry. This is just how Chosen are! They fought their way through a crowd of tens of thousands to get to where they are now. Think of the danger involved in that! It's only natural that they would be a bit proud and arrogant....” Master Cloud-Dao had been cajoling Bai Xiaochun in this way the entire day. Although he did feel slightly embarrassed about what had occurred, he was also a bit derisive of Bai Xiaochun for relying on Feng Youde to do everything for him. If he had true skill, why didn't he just take the challenge himself instead of going around begging for help?

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, suppressed his feelings of depression and followed Master Cloud-Dao to the final immortal's cave. As it turned out, this cultivator was a bit more reasonable. After hearing the request, he smiled immediately.

“Ah, this is a simple matter. I've actually done things like this before. However, I charge an intermediary fee. Junior Brother Bai, I've heard quite a lot about you, so for a mere 1,000,000 merit points, I can get those medicinal plants for you!”

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide. 1,000,000 merit points wasn't a price he couldn't afford, but the seven-colored mistysea grass he wanted should only cost a few tens of thousands. And yet this guy wanted to charge him 1,000,000?

Seeing Bai Xiaochun's expression, the cultivator smiled, a smile of both disdain and confidence. "Think it's expensive? Don't want to pay? That's fine! If you're good enough, just go try to get into the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. If you can get into the top 1,000, then you won't need any help from me at all."

Trying to keep his breathing calm, Bai Xiaochun spun on his heel and, without saying a single word, walked off. Master Cloud-Dao hurried along behind him, sighing. Worried that Bai Xiaochun was going to devolve into a rage, he prepared to offer some words of consolation. However, after some distance, Bai Xiaochun stopped and turned to him.

"Many thanks for your help today, Master Cloud-Dao."

After a moment of hesitation, Master Cloud-Dao said, "Um... Junior Brother Bai, listen, we can still make this happen. Let's just go talk to the hallmaster. He can issue a Dharmic decree, and force them to help you whether or not they want to."

Bai Xiaochun had obviously noticed the veiled looks of scorn that Master Cloud-Dao had attempted to hide throughout the day. Gritting his teeth, he said, "There's no need!"

Master Cloud-Dao eyes widened. "You mean—"

"It's only the top 1,000, right? I'll challenge the trials!" Flicking his sleeve, he transformed into a beam of light that shot toward his immortal's cave.

Master Cloud-Dao stood there watching him leave. After a moment, he laughed softly. "If you actually have what it takes, then why did you need to go begging for help? I bet that within a few days, you'll be back asking for help from the hallmaster."

After returning to his immortal's cave, Bai Xiaochun rested for a bit, then sent a message to his Dao protectors, asking them to get as much information as they could about the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. During the following month, all sorts of

inquiries were made.

Another half a month passed. Finally, Bai Xiaochun felt that he was well enough prepared. Gritting his teeth, he said, “It’s only the top 1,000, right? What’s so special about that? When I come back, I’ll definitely be in the top 1,000!”

Eyes glittering, he packed a few things and then headed for the teleportation portal leading to Myriad Star Rainbow and the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials.

The trials took up nearly thirty percent of Myriad Star Rainbow, and regardless of the time of day or night, the entrance was almost always packed with people. People went into the trials all the time, and if anyone ever succeeded in causing their own star to rise in the ranks, people would immediately notice and get jealous.

The entrance to the trial was an ancient, greenish-black door, fully 3,000 meters tall, carved with countless profound magical symbols that emanated bizarre light and tremendous pressure.

The door was flanked by two enormous statues that depicted, not cultivators, but rather, enormous lion-like beasts, completely fierce and savage in appearance.

The door was opened by just a crack, a crack which from a distance seemed very small, but was actually several dozen meters wide, leaving plenty of room for cultivators to come and go. Even as Bai Xiaochun arrived, he saw a handsome man in a green Daoist robe flying toward the entrance on a cloud.

As soon as the other surrounding cultivators saw the man, they began to cry out.

“That’s Zhao Yidong from Starry Quarter Rainbow! Elder Brother Zhao!”

“This time, Elder Brother Zhao is definitely going to get into the top 1,000!!”

“Yeah, that’s what I was thinking. Elder Brother Zhao is a

Chosen from Starry Quarter Rainbow, and a member of the Hall of Sea Sentinels. The first time he took the trial, he got into the top 5,000. The second time, he made it into the top 3,000. And the third time, he got to 1,500th place. This is his fourth time, and I have the feeling he'll definitely get into the top 1,000!"

Even as they cried out, the star representing Elder Brother Zhao on the green section of the rainbow lit up, prompting even more people to pay attention to it.

Even as everyone focused their attention on Zhao Yidong, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and headed toward the gate. Virtually no one was paying attention to him at all; everyone wanted to see if Zhao Yidong would make it into the top 1,000.

The major milestones in the trial were the 10,000th spot, then the 1,000th, 500th, and 100th. Furthermore, breaking through to a higher-ranking level would provide vastly more incredible rewards.

Rising in the rankings in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars was a way to make a name for oneself. Being in the top 10,000 could be a point of great pride, but only by breaking into the top 1,000 could one truly be considered a true Chosen of the Halls!

Anyone who made it into the top 500 would be considered a Chosen of the Quarters. After that was the top 100. Anyone who reached that level was considered to be a true superstar of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

"I can do it too!" Bai Xiaochun thought, his eyes flashing with determination. Because of what he had experienced in the Hall of Devil Slayers, and because of the passionate atmosphere around him, Bai Xiaochun's heart was starting to pound in excitement. He suddenly felt the same as he had back in his Qi Condensation days, when he was challenging the stone steles of plants and vegetation.

With that, he shot forward toward the crack in the door, and in the blink of an eye, was inside. Rumbling sounds filled his ears,

and his vision swam as numerous images flashed by. Everything was a blur, almost as if the entire world had been turned upside down.

A force began to drag at him that, when combined with the power of the teleportation exerted upon him by the door, became an incredible pressure, like a huge hand grabbing at him and pulling him into another dimension!

His entire body was shaking, and his face drained of blood; this was his first time experiencing a teleportation this intense. Were it not for his powerful cultivation base, he might have been trembling on the point of collapse right now.

Actually, everyone who took the trial experienced this. The truth was that anyone who couldn't handle the pressure would be ejected; the trial by fire actually began with this teleportation!

As things became clear, a blast of heat hit his face, and based on the aroma he had just smelled, he even wondered if his hair was being burned away. He quickly backed up a few steps and looked around to find himself in a world whose border was made up of crimson cliffs.

Beneath the cliffs was a sea of lava that stretched out as far as the eye could see. Fire raged and liquid rock surged, causing intense rumbling sounds to echo out in all directions.

At the same time, numerous wild beasts flew out of the cliffs and attempted to make their way off into the distance.

However, many of them were scorched by the flames, and ended up being burned into ash and swallowed up by the sea.

Chapter 421: How Warm!

Some of the roaring, struggling beasts were stronger than the others, and managed to make their way far off into the distance, where a mirror-like object was visible, into which they disappeared!

Bai Xiaochun looked around at everything that was happening, and then reviewed some of the information he had gathered in recent days.

“The ranking system of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars is divided into different colors, seven in total. The first level of the trial by fire is the red level, and is the simplest of all. You have to get through this sea of flames. As long as you get thirty percent into the sea itself, your personal star will rise up in the rankings!

“The key is how far you can get; that determines your final ranking. After a certain point, you can go right to the next trial by fire. The number of people who actually reach the very end of the red trial is very small....”

Sighing softly, he looked at all of the countless beasts rushing out into the sea of flames, their miserable shrieks echoing out as they died. As of this moment, he was more impressed than ever by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars.

“No wonder people go so crazy over the rankings. I’ve never seen anything like this. So, to get through this first level, you’re supposed to use one of those beasts!” With that, he patted his bag of holding to produce a seven-colored jade pendant, which he had purchased earlier for a few merit points. This jade pendant was designed specifically for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials by fire, and by crushing it, the owner would be safely teleported out of the trial by fire in the blink of an eye. It would also keep a record of the person’s accomplishments and how far they had proceeded.

Of course, throughout the years, there were always people who didn't crush the jade pendant fast enough, and ended up dying.

Bai Xiaochun stepped closer to the edge of the cliff. He could tell that flight was prohibited in this area, leaving him with no choice but to leap down and try to land on one of the beasts flying out from the base of the cliff. After looking down for a moment, he jumped out and began to speed down toward a crimson anaconda that was just flying out over the lava.

When Bai Xiaochun slammed onto the flame anaconda, it twisted back and forth in an attempt to hurl him off of its back. However, Bai Xiaochun stamped his right foot down, sending out a burst of power that instantly cowed it. Eyes shining with madness, it continued to speed along.

All the beasts in this place knew that as long as they could reach the final destination, they would have their freedom.

For them, this red trial by fire was actually a prison!

“Alright, be a good little snake and go a bit faster....”

Bai Xiaochun nervously maintained his position on the flame anaconda as it sped along for about the time it takes half an incense stick to burn. As he proceeded along, he noticed that not only did the sea down below grow choppy, but also, that he wasn't alone. He saw about seven or eight other cultivators, some of whom attempted to switch mounts midflight to be able to get further along into the sea.

There were even two of them who cast covetous gazes at Bai Xiaochun's mount. After all, he was riding a flame-type beast, which could last longer than other beasts in these intensely hot conditions.

“That's a flame anaconda!”

“Flame-type beasts aren't very common here....” Both of those cultivators quickly steered their own mounts in Bai Xiaochun's

direction, clearly hoping to snatch his beast.

“What are you people doing?!” Bai Xiaochun shouted angrily.

Both of the cultivators were in the mid Core Formation stage. None of them said anything, and in fact, after eyeing him for a moment, they both unleashed attacks upon the sea of flames below, causing a huge wave of lava to suddenly roll in his direction.

There was no time for Bai Xiaochun to get angry. As the heat surged toward him, he suddenly realized that he was probably on the verge of being burned to a crisp. Screaming, he dodged to the side, and yet still managed to get splashed.

A moment later, he suddenly stopped screaming, and looked down in surprise at his arm. Although some holes had been burned into his garment, the skin beneath hadn't been harmed at all.

“Eee?” Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, which was when some more drops of burning lava filled the air around him. Instead of trying to avoid them, he let them land on him, whereupon they burned through his clothing down to his skin.

However, all he felt was a bit of a warm sensation, not the scalding pain he had anticipated. At that point, his eyes lit up. Not too far off, the two cultivators who had been closing in on him with ill intentions looked on with incredulous expressions on their faces.

“He... he wasn't hurt?”

“Does he have some sort of magical item protecting him? Wait, that's impossible. Magical items aren't allowed in this trial!” Even as they looked on in shock, Bai Xiaochun reached his right hand down into the lava below, and even swept it back and forth a few times.

“So nice and warm....” he said excitedly.

When the other two cultivators saw that, their eyes nearly

popped out of their skulls.

“Impossible!!”

“Heavens! He... he actually stuck his hand into the lava!!”

“What the....”

As for Bai Xiaochun, he couldn't have been more excited, and immediately threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“What kind of a sea of lava is this? I thought it was supposed to be scary!” Looking very pleased with himself, Bai Xiaochun stepped off of the flame anaconda and dropped down into the lava. Almost immediately, his clothing burned away, revealing his body beneath, absolutely unharmed in any way. He even seemed to be enjoying himself.

“Not bad. Not bad at all....” Then he looked up at the two cultivators who had been on the verge of attacking him, and were now staring back at him with faces as white as sheets. Before Bai Xiaochun could do or say anything against them, they pulled out their seven-colored jade pendants, crushed them, and faded away.

Clearly, they had been worried that Bai Xiaochun might try to get back at them by unleashing some sort of deadly attack.

“Cowards!” he shouted smugly. “Get back here! Come down and have some fun in the lava with me....” With that, he turned and began to swim forward through the lava. Soon, he caught sight of other cultivators in the trial, and when they saw him, they immediately let out cries of shock and disbelief.

“What's... what's that...?”

“Is that... is that a person?!?”

“Heavens! There's actually someone swimming through the lava! That lava is hot enough to melt unfathomantium metals!!”

“Could that thing be some sort of beast in human form?!?”

As such cries filled the air, Bai Xiaochun swam along casually,

feeling very proud of himself. He even took the time to wave to some of the other cultivators. “Why don’t you come down and join me. It’s very nice and warm....”

Soon, he had swum thirty percent into the sea of lava, which was the requisite point to make the rankings. That was when, all of a sudden, a new star lit up on the crimson portion of the rainbow outside.

Of course, the crimson part of the rainbow was filled with countless stars, so the appearance of a new one wasn’t necessarily something very incredible. However, every time a star appeared for the first time, it would shine more brightly than normal to attract the attention, and envy, of those looking on.

“Hey look, a new star! Someone got promoted!”

“Let’s see who it is. Hmm. Bai Xiaochun? I’ve never heard of him.”

Normally speaking, there would have been more discussion about the topic, but considering that Zhao Yidong was in the middle of making an important run, most people were focused on his star.

In fact, there were even some people who had special types of command medallions with which they could watch the competitors inside of the trials. Obviously, such medallions were extremely expensive, so people wouldn’t waste them on a cultivator who hadn’t made it into the top 1,000.

Because no one would ever think to use such a method to observe Bai Xiaochun, nobody on the outside knew that he was swimming through the lava.

However, many people in the trial by fire itself saw him, and their cries of shock continued to ring out ceaselessly.

Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun could achieve quite a bit of speed while swimming, such that he was actually faster than a lot of the

flying beasts.

He even started humming a little tune as he picked up speed. Any time he started to feel uncomfortably hot, he would release some frigid qi. Because of that, he always felt wonderful as he headed toward the bank of the sea.

“This trial by fire is way too simple,” he thought. Clearing his throat, he thought about what a pity it was that more people didn’t realize he was swimming through the sea of lava.

“Once I get out, I’ll be able to tell people about this, and they’ll definitely think I’m super awesome.” Excited, he continued to pick up speed until the bank of the sea was just up ahead.

Meanwhile, back outside, a few of the spectators happened to notice that one of the stars on the red portion of the rainbow was rising at an unusually fast speed. In fact, it was already approaching the border of the red part of the rainbow.

“So fast! Who is that? Bai Xiaochun? That’s the same guy who just appeared for the first time!”

“What’s going on? His star just appeared on the rainbow, and he’s already reached the end of the red portion?!” One of the disciples with one of the special command medallions decided to focus it on Bai Xiaochun’s star, to see what type of beast he was using....

Within the space of a few breaths of time, his eyes had grown as wide as saucers. His jaw dropped, and then he cried out, “How... how could this be happening?!?!”

Chapter 422: He's Swimming?

What the cultivator saw was Bai Xiaochun, looking very pleased with himself and even humming a little tune as he swam merrily through the majestic sea of lava....

The cultivator's cry of astonishment caused quite a few other disciples in the area to look over and see what was happening. The sight that met their eyes was the cultivator with the medallion shaking physically, his expression flickering between numerous emotions, his eyes so wide it seemed they might pop out of his head. Then, he raised a trembling hand to point at the star that represented Bai Xiaochun. Voice quavering with disbelief, he shouted, "He's... he's swimming!!"

Even more people were now looking over, and yet few seemed to understand what the cultivator was talking about. One of the curious disciples even asked, "What do you mean swimming? Who?"

"Bai Xiaochun! That guy whose star just started rising. He... he's actually swimming in the sea of lava!!" This time, the cultivator's shout was met with complete silence. His words seemed beyond comprehension, and in response, many people looked up at Bai Xiaochun's star.

Some of them couldn't resist the temptation, and pulled out their own special command medallions to check the scene out for themselves. When they finally saw for themselves that Bai Xiaochun really was swimming through the lava, they also began to cry out in shock.

"It's true! He's... he's really swimming!"

"Heavens! This is impossible! I've never seen anyone swim in the sea of lava before!"

"How could this be happening...? Is he a man or a beast?!?!"

Such cries led to even more people paying attention. The sudden turn of events left everyone completely shaken, and soon, more curious disciples began to pay the requisite price to use their command medallions to watch personally. When that happened, more excited reactions could be heard, and soon, the area outside the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials devolved into a complete commotion.

“Who exactly is this Bai Xiaochun?!”

Amidst the exclamations of shock, many of the cultivators began sending messages to friends, and some of the generous ones even began to project the images from their command medallions for others to see. More people began to rush over to the area, causing the commotion to grow.

The same thing was happening back in the Hall of Devil Slayers in Sky Quarter. Master Cloud-Dao had already received word of what was happening. Having pulled out his own command medallion, it was with gaping jaw that he watched Bai Xiaochun swim along through the lava.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

Word was spreading rapidly, but Bai Xiaochun had no way of knowing that he was the center of such attention. He was focusing on swimming forward, and also contemplating how wonderful it would feel to show off later in front of everyone.... Eventually, he climbed up onto the opposite bank. Jumping up and down a bit to get all the lava off him, he looked down at himself and then proudly threw on another set of clothing.

“It’s been a long time since I took a bath,” he said. “Feels great!” Of course, little did he know that large numbers of people in the sect were watching his every move....

That included all of the female disciples, many of whom were blushing, but none of whom looked away for even a moment....

Big Fatty Zhang was currently in the Hall of Spirit Enhancement when suddenly, cries of shock began to ring out. After asking curiously what was going on, he was shown an image which was none other than Bai Xiaochun leaping out of the lava....

“Xiaochun....” he said, his mouth gaping.

Back in the trial by fire, Bai Xiaochun looked back at the vast sea behind him, then stuck his chin up and flicked his sleeve.

“With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun reduced this trial to ashes.” Sighing, he assumed the pose of a lonely hero, then began to stride away from the sea. As he did, his vision swam, and he left the red trial by fire. When he reappeared, he was in the next trial, the orange one!

Meanwhile, back outside, Bai Xiaochun’s words and the expression on his face only added fuel to the fire that was the commotion among the onlookers. Many strange expressions could be seen, although no one gave voice to exactly what they were thinking.

“A dark horse! He’s definitely a dark horse!”

“How far do you think this Bai Xiaochun will get?”

As the discussions raged through the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, Bai Xiaochun was just appearing in the orange trial by fire. Almost immediately, deafening rumbling sounds filled his ears, and around him, the world trembled.

In almost the same moment that he appeared within the orange trial by fire, a mountain-like boulder suddenly began to drop down toward him, moving at incredible speed.

Letting out a shriek, he dashed backward, just in time to see the boulder smash into the ground where he had been standing, causing everything to tremble and shake, and even sending crevices snaking out in all directions. Heart pounding, Bai Xiaochun looked back up, and what he saw left him gasping.

The world was completely gray, including the sky and the land. However, that was not the shocking part. Unexpectedly, two enormous stone golems were also there in the world with him.

Both of them were tens of thousands of meters tall, and every move they made caused heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling sounds to echo out. Their bodies were constructed of numerous rocks and boulders lumped together, making them look both like statues, and like puppets. Most terrifying of all was that they were fighting each other!

As they fought back and forth, they let out howls and roars that sounded like thunder. Numerous smaller rocks and stones fell off of them with each blow that landed, which would smash into the ground below, opening up huge craters. Even larger craters would open up when the two stone golems' feet landed on the ground as they took steps.

In addition to the quaking of the ground, the fighting giants caused powerful gusts of wind to sweep out in all directions. They also unleashed divine abilities that unleashed stone dragons and stone spikes which wreaked havoc everywhere.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered as an intense sensation of crisis swept through him. Anxiously dodging the various dangerous elements, he looked around and noticed that there were other cultivators in the area.

Those were the other disciples participating in this trial by fire, and all of them were scurrying about like ants as they avoided the falling stones, blasts of wind, and divine abilities, desperately attempting to get past the area in which the two stone golems fought.

Unfortunately, that was by no means an easy task.... They were caught in the crossfire, like fish who suffered when a castle's walls caught on fire and crumbled into the moat. The two gigantic fighting stone golems put the cultivators down below in extreme

danger.

Based on what Bai Xiaochun could tell, those stone golems were beyond the level of the Nascent Soul stage, and were more like the Deva Realm boy who had come to take him from the River-Defying Sect. As he looked around in shock, he reviewed the information he had studied about the orange trial by fire.

The entire world around him was like a prison, with the two stone golems being prisoners who were forced to fight each other constantly as part of their punishment.

They were forbidden from directly killing any of the disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, but the side-effects of their combat could. Because of that fact, this particular trial by fire was much more difficult than the previous one.

“No wonder there are only a few tens of thousands of stars on the orange portion of the rainbow,” Bai Xiaochun thought, “as opposed to the innumerable amount on the red portion.... Furthermore, only a few thousand people are ever good enough to get past this trial by fire and onto the yellow level of the rainbow.” With that, he began to cautiously make his way forward, relying on his incredible speed to stay out of danger. Although he wasn’t putting on a poor performance, the people on the outside who were watching him had to use up merit points for every second that they continued to observe.

Therefore, many people weren’t very pleased with what he was doing.

“What? He literally swam through the red trial by fire! Why is he going through the orange trial like that?”

“That’s what I was thinking. I’m not going to waste any more merit points watching this guy. Forget it!”

Even as people grumbled on the outside, Bai Xiaochun was picking up speed in the trial by fire. Suddenly, a blast of wind bore

down on him, within which was half of a stone dragon.

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered, and when he realized that he didn't have time to dodge, his eyes flickered with cold light, and he suddenly spun his left leg out in a sweeping kick toward the dragon.

A boom filled the air as the stone dragon exploded, and the wind faded away. Gritting his teeth, Bai Xiaochun shot forward, getting closer and closer to the exit the entire way. However, at a certain point, he stopped in place and looked up at the two enormous stone golems, and as they fought back and forth, his eyes suddenly lit up.

Before, the two stone golems hadn't stood out much to him, but now that he was closer, and had had a chance to look at them for a bit longer, all of a sudden, they seemed a bit familiar.

"If these two stone golems knelt down and stopped moving, then they would look exactly like... that statue I saw in the Ravine of Endless Mountains!!" Gasping, he realized that the more he looked at the giants, the more they looked like that statue. Before long, he was absolutely convinced that they were the same type of creature as the giant in the Ravine of Endless Mountains!

"If you want to cultivate the Living Mountain Incantation, you have to meld with the mountain, and understand everything about it. You have to gain enlightenment of its spirit, and forget yourself. You have to become a human mountain. When you wake up... you will have completed a circle. The divine ability will be complete, and you will have succeeded in becoming... a living mountain!" Panting, he looked up at the two fighting stone golems, and suddenly everything became clear. All his previous areas of confusion were destroyed instantly.

Eyes flashing with excitement, he murmured, "There is no better place than here... to seek enlightenment... of the Living Mountain Incantation!"

Chapter 423: No Stopping

Bai Xiaochun was currently only about 3,000 meters away from the exit of the orange trial by fire. Considering the speed he was capable of, it would only take a bit of effort for him to proceed on to the yellow trial.

In fact, there were many other disciples in the area who, despite trying their very best, couldn't make it past the wind and divine abilities to reach the very spot he was standing in.

Many of them were shocked that he had made it through so quickly, but none of them were paying much attention to him. After all, they were more concerned with their own situation; the slightest lapse in concentration could leave them crushed to death in an instant.

Because of the intense danger, all of the other disciples were essentially risking their lives.

The contrast between all the other disciples, and Bai Xiaochun, who was simply standing there watching the stone golems fight, was very obvious, and some of the cultivators on the outside who were watching him were taken aback.

“What’s wrong with this Bai Xiaochun? He didn’t do anything very special in this section, but he did go really fast. Why doesn’t he just go out through the exit?!”

“This guy is pretty incredible. He’s already in the top 10,000, and once he gets to the yellow section of the rainbow, he’ll instantly be in the top 5,000!”

“What’s he doing just standing there?”

As the cultivators on the outside looked on, puzzled, Bai Xiaochun was still trying to decide what to do. As he stood there, various key aspects to the Living Mountain Incantation were unlocked within his mind, and with each second that passed, it

became clearer that this was an opportunity he could not afford to pass up on.

Unfortunately, his divine sense was restricted within the trial by fire, and could only spread out a few hundred meters. Only being able to observe the giants with his naked eyes was almost like looking at them through a veil.

“If I could get a bit closer, and observe them with divine sense, then I’m pretty sure I could come to understand these stone golems in a much more complete sense!” Eyes bloodshot, he struggled back and forth for a short time before gritting his teeth. “If worst comes to worst, I can just use the seven-colored jade pendant to teleport to safety!”

With that, he burst into motion, not toward the exit, but in the opposite direction!

Everyone looking on was immediately shocked, but before anyone even had a chance to cry out in shock, Bai Xiaochun became a beam of light speeding across the ground of the orange trial by fire. All of the other cultivators within the trial by fire looked on with wide eyes.

“What is he doing...?”

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun shot along, heading directly toward the stone golems, and then, maintaining his incredible speed, he began to fly up the legs of the nearest one.

From a distance, Bai Xiaochun looked like a tiny bug compared to the enormous stone golem. And yet, he was extremely agile, and quickly scrambled and leapt his way up to the giant’s back. Eventually, he reached something of an outcropping where, despite the swaying of the giant’s movements, he was able to settle down cross-legged and send his divine sense out to observe the giant.

By this point, everyone was gasping in shock; both the cultivators

in the trial by fire, and the audiences outside watching events play out on the projected screens.

“He... he jumped up onto the giant itself?”

“Is this Bai Xiaochun crazy?!”

“Wait, is he going to start practicing cultivation? Heavens! What is he thinking? Most people try to get out of that place as quickly as possible. But he actually went backward, and now is going so far as to practice cultivation. It’s a trial by fire, not a place for cultivation!” Bai Xiaochun’s actions were causing a huge stir both inside and outside of the trial by fire.

Meanwhile, Zhao Yidong’s star was not the subject of much attention anymore. Bai Xiaochun’s actions, despite the fact that he was only in the orange trial by fire, were leading to profound shock among the audience.

As time passed, word continued to spread through the cultivators of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and even more people began to pay attention to what was happening.

As for Song Que, he was in the middle of a session of meditation, when suddenly his bag of holding began to vibrate. Opening his eyes, he produced a jade slip from inside that had a short message from one of his friends. After scanning it, his eyes went wide, and he shot to his feet.

“Bai Xiaochun?!” Without any hesitation, he rushed out of his immortal’s cave and looked over at the orange section of the rainbow overhead. Upon finding one particularly bright star, he focused on it, and moments later, Bai Xiaochun’s name appeared in his head.

As the commotion in the outside world spread, Bai Xiaochun was inside the trial by fire, doing his best to stay in one place on the back of the giant. Enduring the screaming winds, he sent his divine sense pouring out to observe the internal structure of the stone

golem.

There was no more suitable place to study this stone golem than the position he had occupied!

“To meld with the mountain,” he murmured, “you have to understand it first!” With that, he rose to his feet and began to climb higher up through the cracks and crevices on the back of the stone golem. The entire time, the stone golem was engaged in fierce fighting with its opponent, swaying back and forth amidst heaven-rending, earth-crushing rumbling sounds.

On a few occasions, Bai Xiaochun was almost hurled off of the surface of the stone golem, especially whenever the other stone golem landed a blow on it, which caused everything around him to shake violently.

Once, the opposite stone giant attacked with a fist strike that summoned a divine ability, leaving Bai Xiaochun coughing up blood. Despite being relatively hidden among the crevices on the giant’s back, he still felt as if his inner organs were vibrating on the point of collapse.

And yet, determination filled his eyes. Tightening his grip on the rocky surface, he once again sent some divine sense out to understand more about the stone golem.

Everyone watching the scene was left gasping, and even the two stone giants had noticed him. However, other than strange gleams which appeared in their eyes, they did nothing, and simply continued to fight.

Meanwhile, in another location on Myriad Star Rainbow, outside of the Ravine of Endless Mountains, Stonemountain was sitting cross-legged on the same greenish-black boulder. Slowly, his eyes opened, and he looked in the direction of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials, his gaze coming to rest on Bai Xiaochun’s star on the orange portion of the rainbow. Gradually, a strange light rose up in the man’s eyes, and a smile broke out on his face.

“Now that’s clever,” he murmured quietly.

Back inside the orange trial by fire, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and climbed higher up the giant. By now, he had a fairly thorough understanding of the internal makeup of the enormous stone creature, except for its head. Of course, that was the most dangerous area of all. But Bai Xiaochun was currently engulfed within the Living Mountain Incantation, in much the same way that he often lost himself in concocting medicine. It was with a seeming complete lack of the fear of death that he flew higher, even as the two stone golems battered at each other endlessly.

Wings appeared behind him as he pushed on with greater speed, and he even relied on the Mountain Shaking Bash and the Undying Tendons in his left leg. Sonic booms echoed out, and a series of afterimages stretched out behind him as he shot upward to appear on top of the stone golem’s head. Winds battered him, making it almost impossible to stand still, but he grabbed onto one of the stone hairs sticking out of the giant’s head, and then sent his divine sense out with reckless abandon.

Apparently, the stone golem did not like its head being interfered with. Frowning, it jerked its head to the side, causing a violent wind to rise up within the trial by fire. Instantly, the other cultivators within the trial began to emit agonized shrieks, and quickly began to crush their jade pendants to teleport away.

Bai Xiaochun finally couldn’t hold on any longer, and was flung off of the giant’s head. At the same time, the huge stone golem began to swing its mountain-like hand toward Bai Xiaochun, almost the way a human would in an attempt to grab a fly out of the air.

As Bai Xiaochun watched the huge hand filling his field of vision, his eyes suddenly flashed with enlightenment.

“Spirit-meld!” Bai Xiaochun roared, his hands flashing in a double-handed incantation gesture as he used the spirit-melding

techniques described in the Living Mountain Incantation. He had attempted this same thing numerous time in the Ravine of Endless Mountains, and had failed each time. But this time, he suddenly felt something stirring in his mind, a connection of sorts with this enormous stone golem.

It was a unique, indescribable connection, almost as if he were melded with the emotions of the giant. He could feel how ancient it was, and could feel its madness and bitterness. He could also sense how much it hated this world, and especially the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and the same thing happened to the stone golem. Its eyes shone with bright light as it looked at Bai Xiaochun, and suddenly, instead of trying to grab Bai Xiaochun, it swatted at him!

Instantly, Bai Xiaochun was sent flying through the air, spinning head over heels toward the exit of the orange trial by fire!

Bai Xiaochun barely had time to pant before he was within the teleportation range of the exit, and was sucked away toward the yellow trial by fire. In the moments before he faded away, he looked back to see both of the stone giants standing there staring at him.

Moments later, intense rumbling sounds once again echoed out. Apparently, their performance would not conclude for all eternity. They would not rest until they died!

Chapter 424: Trial Of Skill

Because the same wind that carried Bai Xiaochun to the exit was like a heavenly tempest filling the entire trial by fire, everyone else who was still inside anxiously teleported out as soon as they could.

As they reappeared one by one outside of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trial, not a single trace of fury could be seen on their faces. Instead, they wore expressions of incredulity and shock.

“What technique does this Bai Xiaochun cultivate? That stone golem actually took the initiative to send him to the exit!”

“How is that possible...?”

“In the red trial by fire, he swam through the sea of lava. In the orange one, the stone golem helped him. Where does this guy come from?!”

As the clamor rose up from the audience, Bai Xiaochun’s star climbed from the orange section of the rainbow into the yellow one, to join the several thousand other stars there!

That indicated that Bai Xiaochun was now in the top 5,000!

Considering the momentous event which was playing out, more and more audience members were personally paying merit points to be able to observe Bai Xiaochun as he made his way through the trials by fire.

Meanwhile, as soon as Bai Xiaochun appeared within the yellow trial by fire, he sensed intense, frigid coldness somewhere nearby, and could also tell that the ground was trembling.

There was still some of bewilderment in his eyes; the events which had played out in the orange trial by fire were still a bit hard to reconcile. His heart even trembled with a trace of residual fear. Plus, there was the sensation he had experienced when the stone golem reached out to grab him in the end. All of it left him gasping

in astonishment.

“There are way too many secrets in this Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Those stone golems were obviously some race of creatures, locked away within the trial by fire. How come these Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstar trials all seem like prisons!?” He was both trembling with fear and shaking in excitement. After all, he had taken a significant step with his cultivation of the Living Mountain Incantation, making progress far beyond anything he had before.

“All I need to do is get into the top 1,000 so I get the seven-colored misty sea grass. Then I can concoct that medicinal pill, and be strong enough to fully cultivate the Living Mountain Incantation!” With that, he looked around excitedly at the yellow trial by fire. Despite what he had experienced so far in the red and orange trials by fire, what he saw around him left him profoundly shaken, and deeply moved by the methods of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

The dimension he was in now was a single room. Standing in the middle of the room was a burly man with a red rope tied around his head. He held a pair of iron tongs in one hand, which he used to hold a red-hot sword in place below him!

Further down, below the red-hot sword, was a channel filled with black liquid that seemed cold beyond description, and emanated a frigid aura.

The burly man held an iron hammer in his other hand, which he used to hit the sword with all the force he could muster.

The resulting booms which rang out were completely deafening.

Clearly, this burly man was a blacksmith, and this room was an ironworks! Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun had apparently been shrunk down to a size much smaller than before, and was now standing on the iron tongs!!

Or perhaps Bai Xiaochun hadn't been shrunk down, and this

place was just enormous, with the blacksmith being a giant! Considering the proportions, if that were true, then the blacksmith was no smaller than the stone golems from the last trial.

Every time the iron hammer smashed down, the entire dimension shook!

Bai Xiaochun's face was completely ashen, and his mind was spinning from the frightening nature of the scenario. Shivering, he looked up at the gigantic blacksmith and his huge hammer, then at the red-hot sword being held by the tongs, and then down at the channel below....

From his perspective, that body of water might as well have been a sea.

After a long moment of indecision, Bai Xiaochun finally gritted his teeth and charged forward, leaping up onto the red-hot sword. Almost immediately, he could sense the heat rising up into his feet, so he rotated his cultivation base to fight back, and proceeded forward.

As he ran along pell-mell, he felt tears welling up in his eyes. This place was simply too hot, and he couldn't help but let out yelps of pain and even leap up into the air. He would have flown if he could have, but flight was restricted in this dimension.

Not only was there the heat to deal with, but there was also the enormous iron hammer. It was like an enormous falling star smashing onto the sword, and if he wasn't careful and got struck, Bai Xiaochun knew that his powerful fleshly body would do nothing to protect him, and he would be crushed out of existence.

"I'm gonna get myself killed! Killed!"

"Agghhh!" he screamed. "Lord Bai is gonna die from this heat!" This heat vastly exceeded the heat from the sea of lava in the red trial by fire, and at the moment Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure if there was anything special that he could do to pass the trial. However, he

did remember that above the yellow portion of the rainbow was the green portion, with only about a thousand stars. That meant that in all of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, only about a thousand Core Formation cultivators had passed this trial.

Considering how enormously large the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was, a thousand was a very small group of people, and from that, it was possible to determine how difficult this trial by fire was!

But Bai Xiaochun was incredibly fast, and also cultivated the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. By focusing all of his frigid qi in his legs and feet, he was able to counteract the heat to some degree. Although it still hurt, he was able to keep speeding along. As of this point, he had made it about thirty percent across the sword.

“Have to go faster....” he thought, fearing that he was going too slow. He was like an ant bustling across a hot kettle, and when the people on the outside saw what he was doing, their eyes went wide.

They had all seen people challenge this trial, and many of them had attempted it themselves. All of them knew that it was very difficult, and that people usually challenged it only with the greatest caution. In fact, most people spent the majority of their time within the trial just observing the surroundings.

After all, this trial was not just about speed or heat resistance, but about understanding vibrations. Every time the hammer hit the sword, the entire thing would vibrate, and at the same time, some of the heat would disperse. Simultaneously, one could take advantage of the shaking of the sword to accelerate. By timing things perfectly, one could make each forward movement without being hurt by the heat.

This type of test was especially designed to hone the divine sense of the cultivators who took it. With exceptional control, they could reduce the danger significantly.

Never before in history had anyone attempted the trial in the way Bai Xiaochun was doing, by just recklessly running forward at top speed.

“This Bai Xiaochun, he... he....”

“This guy is definitely a weirdo who doesn’t like to do things the normal way....” Outside, people exchanged wry glances as Bai Xiaochun sped along screaming as loudly as a rabbit with its tail on fire. That was especially true when some of the disciples heard the things Bai Xiaochun was muttering under his breath.

“What kind of crappy trial by fire is this? What is it testing, how well people can get burned? Ah, I’m gonna die from the heat!!

“How did everyone else pass the trial? I bet none of them matched up to me. They probably ran crying through the whole thing, or maybe even crawled!” Bai Xiaochun himself was on the verge of tears as he flew along, accelerating the entire time. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, he was about seventy percent across....

“Hmmpfhhhh! Bai Xiaochun is the awesomest as usual!” Seeing that he was almost at the end, his spirits rose, and although he continued to shriek in pain every so often, he was still very pleased.

“Now that I think about it, this heat is actually pretty comfortable for my feet.”

Everyone looked on in complete silence, stunned by Bai Xiaochun’s reckless method. From the look of it, he was just about to finish the third trial.

“There’s no way he’s going to pass the trial like this!!” Quite a few people spoke words similar to this as they looked on in envy.

“Dammit. How come he’s going through this third trial so fast!? Aren’t you supposed to get through based on timing out the vibrations...?” More and more people began to comment in such a

way, until Bai Xiaochun was about ninety percent of the way across, and closing in on the end.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very pleased with himself, when, all of a sudden, he realized that something wasn't right.

"Why is the sword moving?" Even as he looked around in surprise, looks of delight could be seen on the faces of the people observing on the outside.

Apparently, the huge giant working with the sword was happy with the results. Lifting it up with the tongs, he began to stretch it down toward the black liquid in the channel below.

"Hahaha! He's quenching the iron!"

"Bai Xiaochun sure got unlucky. I can't believe he's going to quench the iron!"

"This only happens one time out of ten. Bai Xiaochun just got lucky enough to see it!" As everyone reveled in Bai Xiaochun's misfortune, he was standing there on the red-hot sword, an agonized shriek escaping his lips.

He could see what was happening, but before he could react at all, the giant was plunging the sword, and Bai Xiaochun along with it, right into the black ocean of frigid qi.

Bai Xiaochun immediately began to scramble backward, but before he could get more than a few paces, and before he had time to pull out his seven-colored jade pendant, the black liquid was rushing up toward him. "No, I don't wanna—"

Chapter 425: Pissing Off The Guardian

When Big Fatty Zhang saw what was happening, he immediately got nervous, and cried out, “Xiaochun!”

Chen Manyao was also taken aback. As for Master God-Diviner, without even thinking about it, he began to perform an incantation gesture in the hopes of divining some information about Bai Xiaochun’s safety.

Even Song Que was completely shocked.

As for everyone else, they were also stunned, but at the same time, somewhat happy. However, in the following instant, their expressions flickered wildly.

“Why... why isn’t he teleporting out?”

“Don’t tell me he ran out of time....”

“Maybe he didn’t bring in a teleportation pendant?”

“No way! Did he really die, just like that?” The sudden turn of events left everyone flabbergasted, and unsure of how to react. Based on everything they knew, Bai Xiaochun should have just teleported out as soon as he realized he was in danger.

However, after nobody appeared on the outside, they realized that he hadn’t even pulled out a teleportation pendant, leading to various reactions.

“He didn’t really die, did he...?”

“Well, that is everfrigid water. I’ve seen a few people fall into it before, and all of them died instantly....”

“This....” Nobody was really completely sure of what to say. The situation really seemed very strange.

However, that was when, all of a sudden, the eyes of one of the cultivators in the audience went so wide they almost popped out of his skull. Pointing up at the stars, he shouted, “S-swim... he... h-

he's... he's swimming again!!”

Quivering, everyone looked up at the climbing star, whereupon gasping sounds began to ring out.

Moments before, back in the yellow trial by fire, within the black sea-like channel of water, Bai Xiaochun's head had just popped up into the open. Taking a deep breath, he shivered and looked around, his face looking a bit blue.

“Where the hell am I?” he thought, shivering on the verge of tears. “I feel like I'm about to freeze to death.” By now, he was convinced that these trials by fire weren't fun at all. They either involved searing heat or freezing cold, and were all a torment.

“If it weren't for that medicinal plant, I definitely wouldn't come to this place. What kind of a crappy trial by fire is this?” At the moment, he was mostly out of options. Flight was restricted, and the sword was nowhere to be seen. Therefore, he decided that he might as well start swimming through the frigidly cold water....

“Don't tell me this trial by fire is a test of swimming skill?” Sighing and shivering, he proceeded to swim forward. As he did, the people watching on the outside devolved into complete chaos.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun had no way of knowing that. As he swam along, the freezing cold caused his face to turn bluer and bluer. Even his joints started stiffening up. It was at that point that he realized the frigid qi in the area was actually boring into his pores and swirling into his Heaven-Dao Gold Core.

“Eee? Don't tell me the frigid qi here can actually help my cultivation?” Without any hesitation, he unleashed his Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, sending frigid qi swirling out from inside of him. In the blink of an eye, it had filled the entire area.

In response, the frigid qi in the water around him suddenly began to surge toward him. Cracking sounds could be heard and the sea

began to freeze as the qi rushed into Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's mind was spinning as his Heaven-Dao Gold Core rotated with maddening speed, constantly absorbing the frigid qi and building up greater reserves.

Delighted, Bai Xiaochun drew even more deeply upon the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, watching as the absorbed frigid qi caused his Heaven-Dao Gold Core to slowly increase in size. At the same time, his cultivation base began to advance!

Before, he had been in the mid Gold Core stage, but now, he was rapidly approaching the late Gold Core stage. Furthermore, he was also moving away from the Frigid Adept level, and nearing the Frigid Master level.

This sudden stroke of good fortune left Bai Xiaochun feeling so ecstatic that he couldn't help but cry out at the top of his lungs.

“Good fortune! Woohoo! This trial by fire is awesome. I can't believe there's so much good fortune to be had! Hahaha!” Thrilled, he began to absorb the frigid qi at an even more rapid pace. Gradually, a whirlpool began to build up around him as nearly all of the frigid qi within the sea of water began to madly rush in his direction. Eventually, the water ceased being black, and started becoming increasingly transparent.

One could well imagine how, if all of the water in the sea began clear, it would no longer be a channel of frigidly cold liquid.

Everyone on the outside was watching with gaping jaws, completely struck numb by the god-like performance being put on by Bai Xiaochun.

“Were the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials made for this guy?”

“He swam through the red trial by fire, and sought enlightenment in the orange one. And now in the yellow trial he's practicing cultivation?!”

“What’s going on!?!?”

A whole din of voices could be heard, most of them filled with jealousy. Big Fatty Zhang and the other Dao protectors sighed in relief, except for Song Que, whose eyelids were twitching, and whose hands were clenched into fists as he thought back to the Fallen Sword World....

“Wherever Bai Xiaochun goes, he razes the place to the ground!” he growled through gritted teeth.

Many people throughout the rainbow districts of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect were now watching Bai Xiaochun, and could hear his exclamations of delight at how his cultivation base was rising. As of this moment, he was only about 3,000 meters away from the exit, but had already stopped swimming and was just floating there, reveling in the feeling of growing stronger.

“Hahaha! This place really is like a holy land for me!” Bai Xiaochun watched excitedly as his cultivation base continued to climb. Just when he was thinking that breaking through to the late Gold Core stage in this place wasn’t just a dream after all, he got the intense feeling that someone was watching him.

Looking up nervously, he saw that the gigantic blacksmith was staring straight down at him....

Bai Xiaochun shivered as an intense sensation of deadly crisis spread through him. As quickly as possible, he stopped absorbing the frigid qi.

“Okay, I guess I’ll leave now th–” Before he could offer any explanation, the blacksmith howled and began to swing his enormous hammer down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Shrieking, Bai Xiaochun began to swim like mad. As the hammer descended, the black liquid in the channel filled with waves from the force of the incoming blow.

Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun’s mouth as the waves swept

him about. Then, he sent frigid qi surging out of him, not for 3,000 meters, but instead for 9,000 meters, causing everything to turn to ice. Although flight was prohibited, Bai Xiaochun could use his frigid qi clones to switch positions in something like a teleportation, which was exactly the method he employed to race toward the exit.

Almost as soon as he vanished, the huge hammer smashed down into the spot he had just occupied, shattering the layers of ice and sending a huge shockwave out in all directions. Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth, and yet, he still managed to accelerate.

He was now very close to the exit, but in the blink of an eye, the blacksmith had raised his hammer and was sending it back down. Shrieking, Bai Xiaochun barreled through the exit of the yellow trial by fire and was teleported to the next level.

Upon seeing Bai Xiaochun vanish, the huge blacksmith snorted coldly, then looked down at the black water, frowning. He had not swung his hammer with full force just now; if he had, Bai Xiaochun would never have escaped. This blacksmith was different from the stone golems, and was actually on good terms with the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. As such, when this insect came along and began to steal his frigid liquid, all he could do was drive him away.

Everyone who saw what had just occurred was left gasping in shock. In fact, more gasps had come out of the mouths of these disciples than normally could be heard in a whole year.

“He actually pissed off the guardian....”

“He's not challenging the trials by fire, he's actually there to steal stuff!!” Angry exclamations and expressions of disbelief could be heard everywhere. Almost no one outside of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials was sure whether to laugh or cry.

“In any case, this Bai Xiaochun is definitely a top Chosen. However he managed it, he's gotten through three trials, and is

closing in on the top 1,000!”

“Yeah, well let’s see how he does in the next challenge. It’s incredibly difficult. If he gets past it, he’ll be in the top 500!!”

Although Zhao Yidong was already in the fourth challenge, nobody was even paying attention to him anymore. Everyone was looking closely at Bai Xiaochun’s star, and wondering how he would fare in the fourth level, the green trial by fire!

Chapter 426: A Naughty Bridge

“What a stingy blacksmith....” Bai Xiaochun thought as he flew into the exit. Even as he was being teleported away, he already missed the frigid sea. In the short time he had spent in it, he already advanced to the very peak of the mid Gold Core stage.

Before coming to this place, he would never have even dared to hope that such good fortune would come his way.

“If only I’d had just a bit more time, I could have broken through!” After reluctantly leaving the third trial by fire, he found himself in the fourth.

This fourth level corresponded to the green portion of the rainbow, and as soon as he arrived, he tucked away his regret at having left the third trial by fire, and looked around vigilantly. A moment later, his vigilance turned into surprise.

Here, the sky was blue and dotted with fluffy white clouds. A gentle breeze touched his face, and everything seemed very peaceful and devoid of danger.

“Hm, something’s not right,” he thought. According to the information he had collected, the fourth trial by fire was related to thunder and lightning. Even just reaching this point got one very close to being in the top 1,000.

“That’s my goal, the top 1,000....” He looked around hesitantly, but then thought about how simple the third trial by fire had been, and he puffed his chest out and sped into motion.

However, in the instant that he took a step forward, the previously sunny sky suddenly filled with countless black lightning bolts which shot down toward him.

Face falling, Bai Xiaochun fell back as the lightning converged up ahead of him, ripping the air apart into the form of a rift that a person could pass through.

Beyond that rift, Bai Xiaochun could see another dimension.

It was a world filled with lightning, similar to the black lightning from moments ago, but blindingly bright.

There was so much lightning dancing about that it was impossible to count the number of bolts. Furthermore, there was a shocking, gigantic bridge made of lightning itself that stretched out through the dimension!

It was impossible to say how the bridge had been built, but it seemed to have been formed by countless bolts of lightning merged together in shocking fashion.

Astonishingly, it was possible to see a person about halfway across the bridge, trudging forward with great difficulty. It was none other than Zhao Yidong!

With every step that he took, vast quantities of lightning would rain down to block his path and even try to knock him off of the bridge.

The sight of what was happening caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp, but at the same time, he realized that this lightning bridge was going to be quite a headache.

“First was the fire, then the stone, then the ironworks. I can’t believe there’s actually a bridge of lightning here in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. What a bunch of showoffs.” Feeling a bit annoyed, he decided that after getting back to the River-Defying Sect, he would have to sit down and talk with the patriarchs about getting some dimensions like this set up.

After standing there watching for a moment, he gritted his teeth and said, “I have to get into the top 1,000!”

Looking like he was staring death straight in the eye, he leaped through the rift and into the world of lightning.

Almost immediately, bolts of lightning snaked together to form a huge net which began to descend upon him.

It happened so quickly that, before he could try to take evasive action, the lightning slammed into him, provoking an agonized shriek. Down on the bridge, Zhao Yidong heard the sound, looked back, then shook his head scornfully.

“Another fool who overestimates himself,” he said. With that, he gritted his teeth and continued forward.

However, even as Zhao Yidong looked away, the lightning dissipated from around Bai Xiaochun. His clothing had been ripped up, and his hair was standing on end. He was even shivering a bit. Having been struck by countless bolts of lightning left him feeling almost like he was vibrating, and yet, he was unharmed.

After a moment, he let out a long breath, and his eyes began to shine brightly. A pleased expression appeared on his face, and he couldn't help but let out a faint moan of pleasure.

“Feels great....” Just now, he had come to find that being struck by lightning caused the countless impurities that had built up over his years of consuming various medicinal pills to break down and seep out of his pores.

It was almost like being cleaned or purified, as if countless tiny little hands were massaging him all at the same time. The prickly sensation was quite pleasant, and was something he had never experienced in all his years of practicing cultivation.

When people on the outside noticed the expression on his face, they were struck mute. Although most of them had various speculations about how Bai Xiaochun would handle this trial, none of them could have imagined that things would turn out this way.

“Is he... even human!?”

“How shockingly tough must his skin be to not only not feel pain when being struck by lightning, but to actually enjoy it?”

“There are limitations placed on the lightning in there, but each bolt is comparable to the mid Core Formation stage. And those

which strike the bridge include some in the late Core Formation stage!”

As everyone gave voice to their shock outside, back in the lightning dimension, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered as he realized how comfortable he felt. He could sense the spiritual power in his body thrumming, and there were even some qi passageways that he normally had difficulty finding that were now completely visible.

Because of the cleansing of the lightning, his cultivation base had also increased slightly. Excited, he began to move forward along the bridge, which caused countless bolts of lightning to converge and then slam into him. And yet, that only caused him to sigh in satisfaction yet again.

“This place is awesome!” he said, probing his skin a bit to confirm that he really wasn’t injured. As far as he was concerned, this trial by fire really was too simplistic. With that, he began to edge back and forth at the bridge entrance, letting out moans of contentment as the lightning struck him. As for Zhao Yidong, he was so shocked his eyes were bulging.

“Did he really come to challenge this trial?” Gasping, he looked at Bai Xiaochun, and then himself, and then simply gritted his teeth and proceeded onward.

Eventually, the lightning bolts actually seemed to be a bit weak, so Bai Xiaochun finally stepped onto the bridge.

Zhao Yidong looked back, his lips twisted into a cold smile....

“Done showing off? Who cares that you’re attuned to lightning? The lightning outside of the bridge is completely different. Being able to deal with that lightning doesn’t mean that when you get onto the bridge you’ll be able to do the same thi–” However, before Zhao Yidong could finish speaking, an even louder moan escaped Bai Xiaochun’s lips.

More impurities were forced out of him, after which he took a deep breath and looked around at the bridge with shining eyes.

“This is one naughty bridge, alright. Very naughty!” With that, he took another step forward, and then shivered and moaned again. With each step, he moaned, the sound of which was distinctly audible to everyone watching on the outside. Soon, embarrassed expressions could be seen on their faces, and many exchanged awkward glances.

That was especially true of many of the female disciples, all of whom were blushing.

“Completely shameless!!”

“This bridge is obviously supposed to test the limits of the fleshly body. But once this guy shows up, everything changes!”

“Dammit! He’s just showing off the toughness of his skin. How cocky!!”

As of this moment, Big Fatty Zhang, Master God-Diviner, Chen Manyao and Song Que, despite how well they knew Bai Xiaochun, were all smiling wryly. As for Master Cloud-Dao, he was there in the Hall of Devil Slayers, gaping in shock.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t really sure what was going on. However, every time he challenged a trial, unique circumstances unfolded that ensured that his name was being spread throughout the sect in a very short time.

Not only was he thoroughly enjoying the pleasurable sensations, but he was delighted to have the accumulated impurities forced out of him, and realized that, once again, he was hovering on the verge of a breakthrough.

As he continued on happily, he soon reached Zhao Yidong, and when their eyes met, Zhao Yidong’s expression couldn’t have been grimmer.

The sensation of being passed up so casually left him clenching

his fists in anger.

Waving his hand enthusiastically, Bai Xiaochun said, “Greetings Elder Br—”

However, Zhao Yidong simply snorted coldly and looked away. Gritting his teeth, he took another step forward, trembling when the lightning slammed into him.

Bai Xiaochun hurried forward and clasped Zhao Yidong’s shoulder. “You’re doing it the hard way! Look, I’ll show you. You have to make some noise! That makes going forward a lot easier.”

“Screw off!” Zhao Yidong yelled.

Bai Xiaochun was instantly enraged, and shot an angry glare at Zhao Yidong. He had come with good intentions, only to be treated completely rudely! Giving his own cold snort, he walked forward, moaning the entire way to the end of the bridge. Then he turned and glared at Zhao Yidong one last time before jumping into the exit.

Zhao Yidong could only grit his teeth in anger at the ease with which Bai Xiaochun had proceeded through the trial. He took a few more steps, and then realized that he had reached his limit, and it was time to give up. But then he thought back to what Bai Xiaochun had said moments ago, and hesitated. Finally, he decided to give it a shot. Opening his mouth, he exhaled sharply out as he took another step forward....

Although he wasn’t sure if it was an illusion or not, he actually felt less pressure than before. Furthermore, the breath which he had just exhaled contained some impure vital energy.

Shocked, he gritted his teeth and then decided to imitate Bai Xiaochun’s method. As he went forward, more lightning bolts hit him, but he was still able to go about 30 more meters before he couldn’t hold on any longer, and had to teleport away.

In the moment before he left, though, his eyes shone with

excitement as he realized that he now had the key to passing the bridge.

“Next time, I’ll definitely succeed!!”

Chapter 427: Bullies!

Outside the trial was complete silence, as all of the disciples looked on with wide eyes. Soon, their expressions began to transform into those of jealousy, envy, contemplation, awkwardness, and confusion.

The method Bai Xiaochun had used was outrageous, and yet, it had enabled him to pass what they all viewed as the incredibly difficult green trial by fire. Their minds spun in astonishment for a long moment, after which a commotion broke out which could shake heaven and earth.

“Is that really the trick?”

“No way! You can really do it that way?!?!”

“I can’t believe you can use such a perverted method to get past this trial!! Plus, Zhao Yidong had obviously already reached his limit, but then he changed methods and got 30 meters farther!!”

Conversations weren’t just echoing out on Myriad Star Rainbow, but in all of the other rainbow districts as well. Everyone was astounded by the unheard-of method Bai Xiaochun had used to get past the green trial, and many people were very excited.

There were some Chosen who had been stuck in the green trial level for some time, whose eyes were now shining brightly as they realized they might have a chance to get further than they had before. Even if they had to embarrass themselves a bit by moaning, that was something they could accept!

After all, there were more than a thousand stars in the green section of the rainbow, but if you could get past those onto the cyan rainbow, you would be in the top 500. The difference between the top 1,000 and the top 500 was incredible!

The former consisted of the Chosen of the Halls, the latter consisted of the Chosen of the Quarters!

“I get it now. The key to this trial isn’t just speed and fleshly body strength. It can also be used to aid your cultivation!”

“Those weren’t just ordinary moans. They were timed with his breathing. If you’re careful, you can use the power of the lightning to cleanse impurities in your body. You can actually strengthen your fleshly body, and even strengthen your qi passageways!!”

“You know, you might not even need to moan. You probably just have to regulate your breathing. It might not make sense at first, but once you figure out the secret, you can pass it easily!” Numerous Chosen who had long been stuck in the green trial by fire were suddenly enlivened, and rushed in the direction of the Myriad Star Rainbow teleportation portal. Within moments, quite a few people were flying toward the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials from all four of the rainbow districts.

Of course, it wasn’t that no one in the sect knew the secret of the green trial by fire. However, the sect’s demigod patriarch had issued orders that those who did know the trick were forbidden from explaining the truth to others.

Furthermore, all of the other hundreds of disciples who had passed that trial already were not as free and uninhibited as Bai Xiaochun was....

It was only now, thanks to Bai Xiaochun, that the secret of the green trial was now beginning to spread. It could well be imagined that soon, the number of people able to pass this trial would grow rapidly.

“That’s definitely the case. I remember watching some of the other people pass this green trial, and all of them were always breathing in a very strange way!” Chosen were streaming forward to rechallenge the green trial by fire, one of them being a young man who laughed uproariously as he charged into the entrance.

Almost as soon as that young man entered, more Chosen appeared, dozens of them, each and every one ready to use Bai

Xiaochun's method to try to pass the trial!

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was unaware of all of that. After he vanished from within the green trial, he reappeared in the next challenge, the cyan trial by fire!

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials were broken up into colors: red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, and violet. There were seven different trials by fire, and as for the cyan trial, only about 500 people had been able to make it this far. That indicated that Bai Xiaochun was already within the top 1,000!

"Well, that wasn't very hard," Bai Xiaochun said, clearing his throat and swishing his sleeve.

Although he wasn't sure of his exact ranking, when he remembered how many stars were visible on the green portion of the rainbow, he stuck his chin up proudly and looked around at the dimension that contained the cyan trial. "Originally I planned to just get into the top 1,000. Who would have thought that I would accidentally get into the top 500? What a headache...."

Everything around him was gray, including the sky and the land. Silence prevailed, and there was something sinister in the air. Visible upon the ground were rows upon rows of gravestones that seemed to stretch as far as the eye could see.

An ominous coldness pervaded the dimension, something that Bai Xiaochun almost immediately identified as an aura of death. It was strong, so strong that it caused the air to ripple and distort off in the distance.

As he looked around, fear built up in his heart. After all, the silence was terrifying.

"Why did the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect have to go and make a creepy place like this? The aura of death is way too strong. There are definitely ghosts around!" Bai Xiaochun felt the hair standing up on the back of his neck, and swallowed hard as he looked

around. Face slowly turning ashen, he thought back to the unclean thing the patriarchs had mentioned back in the River-Defying Sect, and then swallowed again. Without any further hesitation, he pulled out some paper talismans designed to ward off evil spirits, and began to slap them down onto himself.

“Damned Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. How am I supposed to pass this trial?” Even as his fear mounted, a sinister gaze suddenly locked down on him from afar. It almost felt like a blade coming to rest on the top of his head.

At the same time, a shrill cry filled the air that sounded like metal scraping against metal, as a vengeful soul rose up from one of the gravestones. It had a long, creepy tongue sticking out of its mouth, and its eyes seemed to burn with resentment as it stared at Bai Xiaochun. Then, it began to speed toward him.

It moved with incredible quickness, and in the blink of an eye, was right in front of him. Bai Xiaochun gasped, waving his right hand to unleash the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. Instantly, frigid qi erupted from his finger, slamming into the vengeful soul, which let out a miserable shriek as it began to crumble to pieces. However, it wasn’t destroyed; instead, it began to retreat.

“Eee? Not as strong as I expected.” Excited, Bai Xiaochun was about to start chasing it down when the fleeing soul’s eyes suddenly gleamed with hatred, and even as it fell apart, it let out a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering screech!

The screech filled the world, causing rumbling sounds to fill heaven and earth, and leaving the sky and earth shaking violently. Next, vengeful souls rose up from all of the gravestones in sight. Swarms of the things filled the air, their appearance ferocious and terrifying, and their presence causing the aura of death in the dimension to grow vastly stronger than before.

Bai Xiaochun stopped in place, eyes widening, scalp tingling in

fear.

“S-so... so many....” When he realized that all of the vengeful souls were glaring at him, he shrieked and began to back up. Even as he did, a noise like rumbling thunder filled the air as the gigantic image of a ghostly specter rose up off in the distance.

He appeared to be a shadowy soul wearing an emperor’s crown, almost as if he were the monarch of all the vengeful souls. He was so large that he seemed capable of shouldering the heavens. Green flames flickered in his eyes, a cold smile covered his face, and he carried an enormous trident in one hand. His body looked to be composed of countless other vengeful souls, whose faces were twisted mixtures of laughter and tears.

“Now that you’re here, don’t leave....” The voice which spoke seemed to contain countless other voices, some of which were crying and some of which were laughing. The enormous soul emperor then waved the trident through the air to point toward Bai Xiaochun, after which a shocking energy pulse shot out, which caused all of the other vengeful souls in the dimension to scream shrilly.

Then, rumbling sounds filled the air as the countless, densely-packed vengeful souls began to surge in Bai Xiaochun’s direction.

To make things worse, even more vengeful souls could be seen approaching from over the horizon. Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but let out a shriek; this was the largest group of ghosts that he had ever seen in his life....

Terrified, he gritted his teeth and growled, “Sorry, but Lord Bai doesn’t feel like messing around with you!”

As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, he had reached his goal of getting into the top 1,000. If he hadn’t, things might be different, but considering the danger here, and the fact that he hadn’t been interested in challenging the trials to begin with, he didn’t hesitate at all to pull out his seven-colored jade pendant. Just when he was

about to crush it, the enormous soul emperor off in the distance looked at him scornfully.

“Are you going to fight me or not?!” he said in his sinister, thunderous voice.

Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered. To be directly challenged in this manner, and then just leave, would be a bit of a loss of face. “I....”

However, before he could say anything else, the vengeful souls in the area began to scream even more loudly than before, apparently at the behest of the soul emperor!

The sound felt like stabbing pain in Bai Xiaochun’s mind, causing him to gasp. If he had to fight the soul emperor alone, he might have done it, but considering how awe-inspiring and terrifying the sea of vengeful souls was, he couldn’t help but come away with the feeling that these ghosts were bullying him.

“Wait for me, alright? I’m too tired at the moment. I’ll go back and rest a bit, then return and show you a thing or two!” With that, he crushed the jade pendant and teleported away.

Chapter 428: Don't Try To Convince Me!

There was a whole crowd of people outside who were spending merit points to watch Bai Xiaochun in the cyan trial by fire.

When they saw him screaming in the face of the endless sea of souls, strange expressions appeared on everyone's faces. This trial by fire was a bit different than the ones before it; it tested one's ability to endure the attacks of the vengeful souls, and for how long.

Everyone had assumed that, considering Bai Xiaochun's extraordinary performances before, he would surely pass this trial in some amazing way. But then they saw him fleeing in fear, leading first to shock on their part, and then sighing.

"Well, it's no wonder Bai Xiaochun's momentum faltered here. After all, this trial by fire is connected to the Wildlands, and is designed to prepare us disciples for what exists out there. Even Eldest Brother Zhao Tianjiao had trouble on his first run. It wasn't until later that he managed to take 1st place."

"Exactly. You know, according to a story I heard, all of the souls in the cyan trial by fire were actually brought here from the Wildlands...."

"The fact that Bai Xiaochun got all the way into the top 500 on his first attempt at the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials is extraordinary. It looks to me like he's ranked at over 490! Now that he's in the top 500, he's not a Chosen of the Halls, he's a Chosen of the Quarters! That's a completely different status altogether!"

Even as the discussions raged, Bai Xiaochun appeared in a white column of light at the main gate of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials by fire. As soon as he appeared, countless disciples looked over, gazes filled with envy and other mixed emotions. To see so many people looking at him with open jealousy caused Bai

Xiaochun first to blink a few times, and then begin to calm down from his frenzy of moments ago.

“They were all watching me?” he thought, starting to get excited. Looking up at the rankings, he could see his star in the green section, in the top 500.

“No wonder everyone was watching me....” he thought, clearing his throat at the thought of how awesome he was. Puffing his chest out a bit, he tried to look as much like a Chosen as possible.

“They were all watching me. I really am too outstanding. Ai. I should keep a lower profile. I am a hostage after all.” Feeling incredibly wonderful at being the center of so much attention, and completely forgetting about his hectic final moments in the cyan trial by fire, he stuck his chin up, swished his sleeve, and strutted away.

As he walked along, the eyes of the disciples who looked in his direction shone with respect. He could have simply flown along, but considering his new reputation as a Chosen in the top 500 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, he realized that he shouldn’t be so arrogant. Instead, he decided to give as many fellow disciples as possible a chance to meet him and offer formal greetings up close.

“Yet again I think of the bigger picture,” he thought proudly. Everyone was quick to make way for him, leaving Bai Xiaochun feeling more pleased than ever. In fact, he even took the opportunity to wave to the nearby disciples.

“Hello everyone!” Bai Xiaochun really felt like he was at the pinnacle of existence, with the only disappointing thing being that only a few hundred people were present.

“If only there were a few more people around,” he thought. Sighing, he strolled away through the crowds. One of the members of that very crowd was a young woman who was currently watching Bai Xiaochun walk off.

She wore a long green robe, and was the type of cold person that no one was willing to get close to. There was even a sinister, frigid aura around her that made people standing in the area feel uncomfortable and unsettled.

She had been watching Bai Xiaochun closely the entire time, and when he had started acting proud moments ago, she had chuckled and placed her hand over her mouth. Right now, her eyes were glittering with a very strange light.

Looking up at the entrance to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials, she murmured, “They do seem pretty interesting.”

That young woman was none other than Gongsun Wan’er!

She had parted ways with Bai Xiaochun almost as soon as they had arrived in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. She had long since been promoted to Sky Quarter Rainbow, and was now a green-robed disciple. As of this moment, her eyes were sparkling with profound light; clearly, she was very interested in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars.

Bai Xiaochun slowly made his way along Myriad Star Rainbow, clearing his throat to draw the attention of any groups of disciples he encountered. When he got back to Sky Quarter Rainbow, voices assailed him the moment he began to materialize in the teleportation portal.

“It’s Bai Xiaochun!”

“He ranks at over 490 in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. Bai Xiaochun!”

After the effects of the teleportation faded away, he saw a large group of people gathered outside, their eyes shining with admiration and fervor.

The exclamations being uttered got Bai Xiaochun even more excited than he had been. Right now, he felt more like a Chosen

than he ever had. Smiling faintly, he walked out, waving to the crowd.

“Hello, all of you!

“Keep up the good work, everyone.

“This isn’t my honor and glory, Fellow Daoists, its honor and glory for Sky Quarter!”

Every wave of his hand caused more oohs and ahs to be heard. However, what was somewhat confusing to the cultivators near the teleportation portal was that Bai Xiaochun was simply standing there. Soon, strange expressions could be seen on their faces.

“Why isn’t Bai Xiaochun leaving?”

“There’s something strange about his facial expression. Why does he seem so different from all the other Chosen I’ve seen...?” When Bai Xiaochun saw their expressions, and realized what was happening, he waved his hand a final time and then left.

The entire way back to his immortal’s cave, he walked very slowly, taking the time to smile and nod to everyone he encountered. Quite a few people had been paying attention to his run through the trials, but the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was a vast organization, and there were still plenty of people who hadn’t heard about what happened. As for those people, they returned his smiles with blank stares.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t too happy about that, and actually wished he had someone to go spread word about him. After all, considering how awesome and respectable he was, it wouldn’t be appropriate for him to go praising himself.

“This won’t work! Word spreads far too slowly in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. I need to think of a method to remedy this.” After arriving back at his immortal’s cave, he thought back to the matter of his personal glory, and how to get more people to learn of it.

“I brought Xu Baocai along, not just to get information, but to spread it. Leaving him down in Sky City is a big waste.” With that thought in mind, he sent a message to Xu Baocai telling him to handle matters in the tavern and then get promoted as quickly as possible to come help.

Xu Baocai was thrilled at the prospect of his talents finally being used to the fullest extent possible. After thinking about the matter for a short while, he decided that he needed to convince Bai Xiaochun of how important he was, and quickly composed a response.

“Junior patriarch, I have an idea. As you know, I’m very familiar with this sort of thing, and based on my understanding of the situation, I would bet that people are going to come offer formal greetings soon. Remember, when they show up, you have to pretend that you’re not happy with your performance, and emphasize that you plan to go challenge the trials again. The more you do that, the more people will be convinced of your future potential. And don’t forget, do not try to show off in front of the people who come to visit.”

After receiving Xu Baocai’s message, Bai Xiaochun was convinced that it was great advice. Therefore, after a bit of thought, he opened the door of his immortal’s cave and stood there to keep an eye out for any passersby or visitors.

“Ai, what a headache. Based on what Xu Baocai said, there will probably be a lot of people coming to offer formal greetings soon.” Sighing, he pulled his magical mirror out of his bag of holding and looked himself over. Then he put it away and clasped his hands behind his back, putting a somber, thoughtful expression onto his face. He even seemed to be seeking enlightenment as he stared up into the sky.

Before long, two beams of light appeared, which were none other than Master God-Diviner and Big Fatty Zhang. In the short time which had passed recently, Big Fatty Zhang was already in the

great circle of Foundation Establishment, and was surrounded by some faint, seemingly illusory mist that was quite shocking in appearance.

As for Master God-Diviner, he was in the early Core Formation stage, and was equally spectacular-looking. They had both been quite shaken by Bai Xiaochun's performance, and as for his current appearance as he stood there outside of his immortal's cave, it was beyond ordinary. He seemed lofty to an extreme degree, especially the way the wind caused the hem of his garment to stir slowly, along with his long, black hair. Considering the profound look in his eye, he seemed to have the air of a transcendent being, someone who didn't even belong in the mortal world.

“Junior Patriarch....”

“Xiaochun....”

Before Big Fatty Zhang and Master God-Diviner could do anything other than call out a greeting, Bai Xiaochun swished his sleeve, looking both determined and unhappy.

Glancing at them out of the corner of his eye, he said, “Don't try to convince me!”

Instantly, Big Fatty Zhang and Master God-Diviner's eyes went wide.

Chapter 429: Meld With The Mountain

“I hate that cyan trial by fire! I didn’t know what I was doing, otherwise how could I, Bai Xiaochun, have placed only in the 490s?”

“I’m definitely going to get my star higher. I’m going to get past the cyan part of the rainbow and into the blue portion! Actually, I’m going to go all the way to the violet trial by fire! Just wait until next time and watch me do it!” The decisiveness in his voice could sever nails and chop iron, and his entire person seemed to radiate a valiant air.

Big Fatty Zhang and Master God-Diviner were immediately shaken, and stood there a bit awkwardly for a long moment.

“Don’t be discouraged, Xiaochun,” Big Fatty Zhang said finally. “I heard that when you pass the blue trial, you leave a statue behind that other people who take the challenge have to beat in a fight. Of course, that also means that you have to beat the statue left behind by the previous winner. But you shouldn’t have any problem next time you challenge the trials. You’ll definitely leave your own statue behind!”

“That’s right, Junior Patriarch. The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is huge, so you getting into the top 500 is already a huge accomplishment. I’m sure that next time, you’ll make even a bigger stir!”

As they persuaded him, his gaze softened a bit. However, as he looked down from the sky, the regret and defiance could still be seen in his expression.

Master God-Diviner and Big Fatty Zhang weren’t quite sure what to make of the situation, so they offered some more encouragement. In the end, though, Bai Xiaochun still didn’t seem to be in a very good mood. Finally, they clasped hands and left.

As soon as they were gone, Bai Xiaochun’s expression relaxed,

and he looked very proud of himself.

“Hahaha! My performance was spot on. Xu Baocai really earned his keep this time!” Thinking back to the expressions on the faces of Big Fatty Zhang and Master God-Diviner, his excitement rose. However, that was when another beam of light appeared, flying toward him, within which was none other than Chen Manyao.

As she approached, Bai Xiaochun once again looked up, clasped his hands behind his back, and put a defiant expression on his face. The profound gleam once again filled his eyes, and before she could even say anything, he said, “Don’t try to convince me! I hate that cyan trial by fire....”

And to Chen Manyao’s astonishment, he went on to repeat exactly what he had said to Master God-Diviner and Big Fatty Zhang.

Chen Manyao was taken aback, and almost felt as if she didn’t know this version of Bai Xiaochun who was standing in front of her. “Xiaochun, you don’t need to feel bad....”

Over the course of the following several days, whenever people came for a formal visit... they would see this version of Bai Xiaochun, and hear the same words. As a result, the admiration and respect they felt for him continued to grow.

Three days later, Xu Baocai finished wrapping up matters in the Live Forever Tavern and was promoted to Sky Quarter Rainbow. The very first thing he did was go to Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave, where the two of them hunkered down for a long meeting. Afterward, Xu Baocai requested a sizeable sum of merit points for operating expenses and then made his way off, bursting with smugness and pride.

Xu Baocai really did have some unique methods for digging up information and spreading rumors, and in this situation, he was using his talents to the absolute limit. As he propagated stories about Bai Xiaochun being a Chosen, several different tales about

Bai Xiaochun began to spread. Some of the stories praised him, and others belittled him, and there were actually some aspects of each story that contradicted the others. However, that only led to more people talking about the subject.

Before long, Bai Xiaochun's name was well known in all of Sky Quarter Rainbow. Of course, Bai Xiaochun had his own role to play; he went out every day to places where disciples gathered, his hands clasped behind his back, looking defiant and lost in thought. Of course, the cultivators on Sky Quarter Rainbow weren't familiar with Bai Xiaochun, and so from what they could tell, he looked like the picture of a proud Chosen, whose determination and confidence ran deep in his bones.

Because of that, many cultivators began to look forward in anticipation to the next time Bai Xiaochun challenged the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials.

To be the center of such attention on a daily basis left Bai Xiaochun's heart bursting with joy. Of course, he had long since gone to buy the seven-colored mistysea grass, which had been the entire reason he had challenged the trials to begin with.

After combining them with the ingredients he had already prepared, he went into secluded meditation for a few days and concocted a medicinal pill that could be used to forget the self.

The resulting pill glowed with seven-colored light that reflected in Bai Xiaochun's proud eyes.

"This time I'm definitely going to gain enlightenment of the Living Mountain Incantation!" Spirits soaring, he thought back to the stone golems he had encountered in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trial, and felt more confident than ever about succeeding. Medicinal pill in hand, he flew out of his immortal's cave and headed to Myriad Star Rainbow, and the Ravine of Endless Mountains.

Outside of the ravine, he once again saw Stonemountain, sitting

there on the boulder, looking very much like a monkey.

Yet again, Bai Xiaochun was unable to determine the level of Stonemountain's cultivation base. Furthermore, there was something about his aura that seemed similar to that of the stone golems. After staring for a moment, he clasped hands and bowed. "Bai Xiaochun offers greetings, Elder Brother Stonemountain."

Stonemountain's eyes opened, and he looked at Bai Xiaochun for a moment before giving a rare smile and then a nod. Not saying a single word, he waved his hand.

Instantly, the ground trembled, and the familiar stone hand stretched out. Bai Xiaochun leaped up onto it, whereupon his vision swam and he was teleported away. When things were clear again, he once again found himself in a strange world, with countless mountain peaks stretching out in all directions.

This time, his eyes shone with confidence as he retraced the path he had followed last time until he found the mountain that looked similar to the stone golems. Once he found it, he settled down cross-legged on the giant's head.

Then, he produced the medicinal pill he had just concocted, hesitated for a moment, and gritted his teeth.

"I acquired the Living Mountain Incantation back when I got all of the legacy seals from that legacy zone. If I don't cultivate it to completion, it would definitely be a big waste. I have to succeed this time!" Taking a deep breath, he looked down at the medicinal pill he had created to forget himself.

"To meld with the mountain," he murmured, "first forget yourself, then forget the mountain. When you wake up, you will be the mountain, and the mountain will be you...." Following the methods described in the Living Mountain Incantation, he began to seek enlightenment of the structure of the mountain, and then meld with it. He tried several dozen times, until it became something of a reflex to do it. Only then did he place the medicinal

pill into his mouth and swallow.

Once the medicinal pill sank down into his belly, it melted, transforming into warm currents that filled his body, creating something of a stream leading to his head. Then rumbling sounds filled him, almost like thunder from the heavens. At the same time, his mind began to devolve into chaos, eventually becoming a complete blank.

Although his mind was a blank, he remained seated there just as before, trying to gain enlightenment of the structure of the mountain, and then meld with it.

Time passed. Three days later, Bai Xiaochun was still sitting there motionless. He had forgotten about himself, and his mind was a complete blank. He had even forgotten about the golem-like mountain he was seated upon. His mind seemed to be completely devoid of thought.

Eventually, on the seventh day, some simple thoughts appeared in his mind. More days passed, and the thoughts seemed to slowly converge, transforming into the outline of a stone golem.

That outline looked very similar to the mountain beneath him, and also the stone golems in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials....

Another half a month passed, and Bai Xiaochun still had not woken up. The image of the stone golem in his mind was growing more and more complete, and increasingly lifelike.

**

Meanwhile, out in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, something happened that rocked the entire sect; even the sect leader was shaken deeply.

Gongsun Wan'er... challenged the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials!

At first, few people paid much attention to her. However, as her

star rose, people began to notice the unique methods she was using to pass the trials, and more people started to pay attention to her!

In the red trial by fire, she became a god of death within the sea of lava, slaughtering beasts the entire way and using their corpses to cross the sea. The other disciples in the trial by fire with her were completely shocked to see her make a bridge of corpses!

In the orange trial by fire in which the stone golems were fighting each other, all the other disciples cowered in fear, whereas she simply walked straight through. In the yellow trial by fire, she did the same thing by simply walking casually across the metal being forged. In the green trial by fire with the lightning, she actually absorbed much of the lightning through her mouth as she walked across the bridge.

Most shocking of all was that in the cyan trial, her mere appearance within the trial caused the vengeful souls to tremble and hide away. Only the soul emperor showed up to fight her, and in the end, they fought to a draw!!

The entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was shocked by what had occurred.

After all, the soul emperor's power was equivalent to the early Nascent Soul stage!

Chapter 430: I Can Too!

As Gongsun Wan'er stepped from the cyan trial into the blue trial, Bai Xiaochun slowly opened his eyes in the Ravine of Endless Mountains.

He had a blank expression, and just barely visible within each eye was the flickering image of a stone golem.

Only gradually did he begin to become aware of his surroundings. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he took a deep breath, and was fully conscious. He felt like he had just woken up from a long sleep, with his thoughts being a bit sluggish.

“Did it work?” Rubbing his forehead, he slowly stood up and then checked his cultivation base. However, he still wasn't sure if he had succeeded; everything that had happened recently was a complete blank.

“This....” After a moment of hesitation, he used the techniques of the Living Mountain Incantation to perform an incantation gesture. When he did, a tremor ran through him, and his eyes widened as an explosively powerful force began to build up inside of him.

At almost the exact same instant, the images of two stone golems grew clear in his eyes. As for the power inside of him, it continued to build, and he suddenly felt as if his own body were restricting it and making it impossible to release. Without even thinking about it, he opened his mouth.

In that instant, a rumbling sound that resembled his voice exploded out in a roar. As it did, the illusory image of a gigantic stone golem appeared above him, roughly 30 meters tall!

As he roared, he leapt up into the air, his eyes shining with berserk light. The power inside of him had reached the point where he felt that he had to release it, so he clenched his hand into

a fist and then unleashed a punch toward one of the other nearby mountains.

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as an enormous force slammed into the mountain peak, causing it to tremble violently and then explode into pieces. The sea of clouds in the area roiled violently, and from a distance, it almost looked like Bai Xiaochun was at the center of a huge vortex.

The power that he had just unleashed was by no means weaker than that of the early Nascent Soul stage, and had been pure fleshly body power. Perhaps it was even correct to say that it was a magic pertaining to the fleshly body!!

It was a secret magic just like his Throat Crushing Grasp, Mountain Shaking Bash, and Undying Hex!

After unleashing the fist strike, Bai Xiaochun felt a tremor pass through him. Then, the illusory image of the stone golem faded away into obscurity. Bai Xiaochun's face was a bit pale, and yet, his eyes were shining with disbelief and excitement.

"This is totally different from the Undying Live Forever Technique. Although I won't be able to use it as many times in a row as the Throat Crushing Grasp or the Mountain Shaking Bash, this Living Mountain Incantation is actually the most powerful technique I can unleash. It's way more domineering than the Throat Crushing Grasp!" After a quick check, he confirmed that using the fist strike seemed to converge all of the different types of power in his body, and that after using it, he was almost completely drained.

Even still, it was worth it to be able to unleash a strike that could shake heaven and earth!

"Hahaha! I finally succeeded. From now on, the Living Mountain Incantation will be one of my trump cards. Hmph! Bai Xiaochun is now invincible to anyone under Core Formation!" Filled with excitement at how awesome he was now, he flew away in high

spirits to leave the Ravine of Endless Mountains.

Upon emerging out into the open, he immediately turned to look at Stonemountain on the boulder, hoping to share his success. After all, despite not being able to assess Stonemountain's cultivation base, he could sense from his aura that he too cultivated the Living Mountain Incantation.

However, he quickly realized that Stonemountain was staring off in the direction of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials.

"Elder Brother Stonemountain," Bai Xiaochun called out excitedly, "I succeeded!"

"Mhmm." Stonemountain had a very serious expression on his face as he continued to look in the direction of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials.

Surprised at the reaction, Bai Xiaochun repeated himself. "Elder Brother Stonemountain, I said that I just succeeded with the Living Mountain Incantation!"

Stonemountain didn't even look over at him, and in fact, seemed to be getting even more somber by the moment. "Oh. Congratulations."

The fact that he had just succeeded in fully cultivating a powerful trump card, but had no one to share his joy with, was a bit depressing. However, he couldn't resist the urge to look over at the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials to see what Stonemountain found so interesting.

Almost immediately, he realized that on the blue portion of the rainbow, there was a star that happened to be glittering more brightly than the others, to an eye-catching level. Focusing on the star, he suddenly found that Gongsun Wan'er's name had popped into his mind.

"Huh?" he said, jaw dropping. He quickly took out a command medallion and spent some merit points to see what was happening

inside the trial. To his shock, he saw Gongsun Wan'er in the blue trial, fighting some unknown young man!

His cultivation base was in the great circle of Core Formation, and he was wearing a cyan robe. His face was expressionless, and he was surrounded by countless swirling bolts of lightning. As he fought back and forth with Gongsun Wan'er, he unleashed divine abilities that were definitely beyond his own cultivation level.

Despite that, Gongsun Wan'er unexpectedly waved her finger, causing the young man to shake violently and then explode into pieces.

Bai Xiaochun gasped, and as for all of the other cultivators in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect who were watching the scene, they were completely shaken. After all, the statue in the blue trial by fire was left behind by the most recent previous successful challenger.

In other words, the statue she had just defeated represented a consummate Chosen who occupied 8th place in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!

Anyone who wanted to get into the blue section of the rainbow would have to fight the statue left behind by the previous victorious challenger. That was the only way to get into the violet portion of the rainbow. In the moment that Gongsun Wan'er attained victory, a statue of her formed right there in the blue trial by fire.

That indicated that anyone who came after her to try to get into the blue trial by fire would have to defeat the statue of Gongsun Wan'er in battle. A moment later, Gongsun Wan'er vanished, to appear within the violet trial by fire!

In that instant, the star which represented her on the outside rose from the blue section of the rainbow all the way to the violet section, becoming the ninth star therein!

Countless cries of shock and surprise filled the air. After all, for many years, the current generation of Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars had only seen eight stars in the violet section of the rainbow. But as of this moment, there were nine!

According to the sect rules, anyone who reached the violet portion of the rainbow would have any request they made of the sect fulfilled, as long as it wasn't too excessive!

Another thing happened when Gongsun Wan'er entered the violet trial. No one could see her anymore. According to the rules of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials, it was permissible to observe the first six trials by fire, but as for the final trial, the violet one, only the people who entered the trial itself were allowed to know what happened inside.

Very few people were aware of what the violet trial by fire was like.

It only took a few moments for Gongsun Wan'er to appear back out in the open, and her name remained in the ninth spot. Immediately, rumors began to spread through the sect regarding what that indicated.

Even still, Gongsun Wan'er had risen to prominence by reaching 9th place. It was a spectacular accomplishment that shook the whole sect. Even more shocking, moments later, a Dharmic decree was sent out from the sect leader's portion of Myriad Star Rainbow.

"Gongsun Wan'er, your request is granted. Henceforth, you are no longer a hostage, but rather, a core disciple of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!"

Everyone was completely stunned by the announcement, and actually, it was the first time that most people even realized that Gongsun Wan'er had been a hostage. As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes were wide with shock.

This was his first time realizing how amazing Gongsun Wan'er actually was. However, he also felt a bit irritated. Then he thought back to everything that had ever happened with Gongsun Wan'er, and suddenly, his vigilance rose.

“What’s so amazing about that...?” he muttered as he left the Ravine of Endless Mountains. As he walked along, nobody paid much attention to him at all; they were all talking about Gongsun Wan'er.

More irritated than ever, he returned to Sky Quarter, and found that all of the cultivators there were also talking about Gongsun Wan'er. Depressed, he went back into his immortal's cave and sat down.

Gritting his teeth, he said, “I can do the same thing. I got all the way to the cyan trial last time. It’s just that there were too many ghosts! I should figure out a way to suck all of the ghosts into one place and keep them from moving. Then I can just walk past them.” Frowning, he began to think about the matter.

A few days later, he looked up, his eyes bloodshot, but his expression one of excitement.

Chapter 431: Master, Spare Me!

“They’re just some little ghosts, right? It’ll only take a bit of thinking for Lord Bai to figure out a way to transform them into nothing but ash!” Bai Xiaochun spent several days wrestling with the problem. At first, he considered using evil-warding talismans, but considering the vast numbers of vengeful souls in the cyan trial by fire, he decided that such a method wouldn’t be very reliable.

Besides, back when he had first faced all the vengeful souls back then, he had plastered a good amount of such talismans on him, and it hadn’t done much good at all.

“Evil-warding talismans aren’t going to work. In that case, I need to concoct a medicinal pill. Only then will I be confident enough to succeed....” At that point, his eyes glittered with anticipation.

After some thinking, he came up with an idea for a new pill formula that he was sure would work. It wouldn’t require many medicinal plant ingredients, and would mostly serve as a vehicle with which to use the powers of gravity and repulsion that he had begun to study in the Spirit Stream Sect.

“I need to concoct a spirit medicine that will cause all of the vengeful souls to gather together in one spot....” He wanted to make something that, as soon as it appeared in the open, would cause all of the vengeful souls in the area to rush toward it at top speed. The mere idea of concocting a pill like that got him fidgeting in excitement.

Eyebrows dancing in anticipation, he began pacing back and forth in his immortal’s cave, continuing to analyze his new pill formula. Finally, he slapped his thigh.

“This is definitely going to work. The glowing sphere I made with the powers of gravity and repulsion could rip clothes to shreds, and even form hallucination smoke. I can definitely use it to gather souls together!” Having reached this point in his train of

thought, Bai Xiaochun made his decision. He rushed out of his immortal's cave and went over to the Hall of Devil Slayers, where he got quite a large collection of medicinal plants, after which he returned and went into secluded meditation.

Three days later, rumbling sounds filled his immortal's cave. Bai Xiaochun's eyes were bloodshot as he looked at the white spirit medicine he had just concocted. Taking a deep breath, he drew upon the powers of gravity and repulsion and began to infuse them into the pill. Gravitation and repulsion were not easy to cultivate, but Bai Xiaochun had spent dozens of years on his research, and as such, was able to manipulate them, albeit with some amount of difficulty.

It took several hours, but he managed to infuse the medicinal pill with the powers of gravity and repulsion, after which he excitedly pulled out his copper mirror.

“Imposter Nightcrypt, get out here!”

Imposter Nightcrypt's soul shivered. He didn't really have any desire to emerge from the copper mirror, and yet, didn't dare to refuse. Trying not to cry, he flew out into the open.

“Master, you—”

Before he could finish his sentence, Bai Xiaochun shouted, “Take this!”

And then he crushed the medicinal pill.

A boom rang out, and Bai Xiaochun's clothes were instantly shredded to pieces, leaving him buck naked. As for imposter Nightcrypt, he instantly screamed, and yet, after a moment, the scream faded into an exclamation of surprise.

“Huh? I'm not hurt! Hahaha! I'm fine!” Imposter Nightcrypt hadn't been affected at all. Excited, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, who was looking back at him with his bloodshot eyes twitching a bit. Imposter Nightcrypt shivered, and then slunk off to the side,

convinced that Bai Xiaochun was in a very dangerous mood.

Panting, Bai Xiaochun looked down at the crushed remnants of the medicinal pill. Then he completely ignored imposter Nightcrypt, threw on another set of clothing, and began to concoct another pill.

Another three days passed....

“Take this!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, crushing the medicinal pill.

A boom rang out, and this time, his clothes were completely unaffected. However, the force of the explosion slammed Bai Xiaochun into the wall of the immortal’s cave, causing cracks to spread out in all directions.

Only after a long moment passed did Bai Xiaochun then fall down to the ground, leaving a human-shaped indentation in the wall. Face ashen, and yet also filled with determination, he gritted his teeth and started working again.

As for imposter Nightcrypt, when he saw what had just happened, he couldn’t help but gasp.

“What... what kind of medicine is he concocting?”

Another four days passed, and another medicinal pill appeared in Bai Xiaochun’s hand. His eyes were so bloodshot that they were almost completely red as he backed up until he was leaning up against the wall. Convinced that this time would be a success, he crushed the pill and shouted, “Alright, take this!”

This time, his clothing was again shredded to pieces, and instead of being pushed backward, he was pulled forward, body completely out of his own control as he slammed into the opposite wall. Popping sounds rang out, and cracks spread out in the wall. Meanwhile, imposter Nightcrypt looked at Bai Xiaochun, shivering violently.

“He’s... he’s not concocting medicine, he’s trying to kill himself!” Imposter Nightcrypt was shaking in fear and anxiety, not at the

prospect of Bai Xiaochun dying, but at the fact that Bai Xiaochun had tested the first pill on him. He couldn't imagine what fate he would meet if Bai Xiaochun succeeded in concocting whatever pill he was planning.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was furious. After struggling to get out of the wall, he once again began to concoct. A few more days went by, and he had a new version of his spirit medicine. This time, he crawled into one of the holes he had previously punched into the wall, in the hopes that such a position would keep him safe. With that, he gritted his teeth and prepared to crush the pill.

Unable to keep control of himself, Imposter Nightcrypt wailed, "Master, spare me!"

Bai Xiaochun sighed and said, "Trust me, this time it's going to work!"

With that he crushed the pill. Instantly, a huge boom rang out as the powers of gravitation and repulsion erupted out. This time, the pill merely exploded, and Bai Xiaochun, despite being hidden in the wall, was still hit by the blast. The entire immortal's cave even rocked back and forth.

Bai Xiaochun was wrenched out of his position in the wall and slammed into the ground, where he lay for a long moment before struggling back into a sitting position. Then, he yet again began to concoct medicine, seemingly as if his life depended on it.

Imposter Nightcrypt was trembling on the verge of collapse, and couldn't stop wondering what his future held. It was a true torment; every time he saw the tragic results when Bai Xiaochun crushed one of his pills, his terror mounted.

A few more days passed, and Bai Xiaochun started to get ready to perform another test. Wailing, imposter Nightcrypt said, "Master, spare me, please!!"

He truly wished to be spared. He felt like a prisoner on death

row, whose head had been placed on the chopping block, only to have the axe veer to the side and miss its mark over and over again. It was a truly agonizing feeling.

“Trust me, this time it’s going to work!” Howling, Bai Xiaochun crushed the medicinal pill, causing another boom to echo out....

Time passed. Two whole months. During that time, Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave continued to rock and sway on a regular basis. As for Bai Xiaochun himself, were it not for the fact that he had a tremendously powerful fleshly body, he would have been severely injured on several occasions.

Finally, on a day when imposter Nightcrypt was wracked with despair, a boom rang out, and a powerful gravitational force erupted out. Imposter Nightcrypt was instantly grabbed up and, in almost the exact same instant, was sucked over to Bai Xiaochun’s palm.

“Hahaha! Success at last!!” Bai Xiaochun cried, standing there in the wreckage of his immortal’s cave, his hair in complete disarray, but his expression one of pure excitement. Clearly, Imposter Nightcrypt hadn’t been the only one to be in torment over the past two months.

As of this moment, he had created a medicinal pill that, when crushed, would unleash the powers of gravity and repulsion, and drag any nearby soul bodies to the location where the pill had been crushed.

“I’m going to call it the Soul Convergence Pill!” With that, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Although he was tired, he was almost mad with excitement, and had already decided that he would rest up a bit and then go challenge the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials again.

“This time I’m definitely going to show those measly ghosts a thing or two!” Feeling prouder of himself than ever, he concocted some more Soul Convergence Pills, then settled down cross-legged

to do some breathing exercises.

Over the following month, Bai Xiaochun went mad concocting Soul Convergence Pills. Whenever he got tired, he would do some breathing exercises, then start work again as soon as possible. As time went along, not only did he build up a shockingly large collection of pills, but because of the constant cycle of exhausting himself and then recovering, his cultivation base began to creep closer toward the late Gold Core stage!

One day when he finished a run of concocting, and had just settled down to do some breathing exercises, he suddenly looked out of his immortal's cave, an expression of surprise on his face.

Soon, three beams of light became visible, flying toward him. They were none other than Master God-Diviner, Chen Manyao, and Xu Baocai, and all of them looked very anxious.

Considering he was at the peak of the mid Gold Core stage, Bai Xiaochun could tell even from a distance that they were upset, and that something was clearly going on.

Even before they reached the immortal's cave, they began to call out at the tops of their lungs.

“Junior Patriarch, Big Fatty Zhang's in trouble!”

“Xiaochun, hurry up and save Big Fatty Zhang!!”

Upon hearing their words, Bai Xiaochun's face fell. Swishing his sleeve, he slammed open the door of the immortal's cave and rushed out in a blast of wind.

Grabbing Master God-Diviner by the shoulders, he shouted, “What's wrong with Eldest Brother?”

Chapter 432: Wracked With Anxiety!

Master God-Diviner could see how anxious Bai Xiaochun was, and knew how important Big Fatty Zhang was to him. Shivering, he replied, “Big Fatty Zhang is trying to reach Core Formation, and fell into a deadly crisis!”

Looking equally anxious, Xu Baocai offered further explanation. “Last month, Elder Brother Zhang could tell that he was on the verge of reaching Core Formation, and went into secluded meditation. Master God-Diviner and I stood as Dharma protectors outside of his immortal’s cave. At first, everything seemed normal, and we assumed he would only need a couple of months to finish the process. But for some reason, on the third day, his aura began to weaken. As of now, there’s only a faint bit of it left!!”

“I went too,” Chen Manyao said anxiously, “but his immortal’s cave is sealed tight, and we can’t get in. We didn’t want to blow up the door either, in case that would cause further problems.” Considering how long she had been part of the group, she considered herself part of them now, and was just as anxious as they were about Big Fatty Zhang being in danger.

After hearing their explanations, Bai Xiaochun didn’t hesitate for even a moment. Transforming into a beam of prismatic light, he shot through the air at high speed toward Big Fatty Zhang’s immortal’s cave.

Master God-Diviner, Xu Baocai and Chen Manyao all followed along as fast as they could. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, Big Fatty Zhang’s immortal’s cave appeared up ahead. Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding with nervousness; Big Fatty Zhang was his Eldest Brother, and the two of them had a deep connection. After all, the two of them had begun their friendship on the very day Bai Xiaochun joined the Spirit Stream Sect.

His mind was almost a complete blank as he landed in front of the immortal's cave, the door of which was sealed tightly. Bai Xiaochun quickly sent out some divine sense, backed by the power of his mid Gold Core stage cultivation base. Almost instantly, he could sense Big Fatty Zhang's aura, and how weak it was. Apparently, the flame of his life force was on the verge of being snuffed out.

It almost looked as if he had made repeated efforts to reach Core Formation, and had failed each time, causing much of his life force to waste away.

“How could this be happening?!” Bai Xiaochun said. Eyes bloodshot, he clenched his hands into fists and then called upon the explosive power of his Undying Hex, as well as the frigid qi that came from being on the verge of the Frigid Master level. Almost instantly, the door of the immortal's cave was covered with spider-web like cracks, before exploding into bits.

Bai Xiaochun charged inside, to find Big Fatty Zhang sitting there as ashen as death, looking like little more than a skeleton!

A faint mist surrounded him, some of which would occasionally be sucked into his body before flowing out again. As that happened, Big Fatty Zhang's aura slowly faded, to be replaced by an increasingly strong aura of death. From the look of it, he was hovering on the very brink of perishing.

“Eldest Brother....” Bai Xiaochun murmured. It felt like his heart was being cut in half by the sharpest of blades. Without hesitation, he reached out and put his right hand on the top of Big Fatty Zhang's head, then poured life force into him, hoping to bolster the flickering flame of his life force.

It only took a moment for Bai Xiaochun to realize that there was some sort of strange power inside of Big Fatty Zhang, something that was repelling the outside life force. That power felt like some sort of complete and utter determination. Furthermore, there in

Big Fatty Zhang's dantian region was a dense cloud of mist that looked almost like a sphere.

Every so often, the mist would converge together into the shape of a core, after which it would fall apart.

Apparently, the mist swirling around Big Fatty Zhang had been created by the same force.

"What's going on!?" Bai Xiaochun said, stunned. Because of the force of expulsion inside of Big Fatty Zhang, any life force he sent in was almost completely dispelled. At best, he could slightly reduce the speed at which Big Fatty Zhang's life force was fading away. At the current rate, it would likely be only two hours or so before Big Fatty Zhang wasted away into death.

It was in that moment that Master God-Diviner and Chen Manyao arrived. When they saw Big Fatty Zhang's appearance, they both gasped.

"How is this possible?" Master God-Diviner said, looking shocked. "Big Fatty Zhang was only in secluded meditation for a month! How could he have been reduced to this state? It looks like he made ten failed attempts at reaching Core Formation!!"

Chen Manyao looked a bit more closely at the mist, and then suddenly, she said, "That mist.... Big Fatty Zhang is a spirit enhancer. Could it be... that he's trying to form a Will Core?!"

"Will Core?" Bai Xiaochun looked up at Chen Manyao, his expression fierce, not because of Chen Manyao, but because he was hovering on the brink of madness because of Big Fatty Zhang.

Chen Manyao immediately revealed everything she knew about Will Cores. "In ancient times, spirit enhancers often attempted to form Will Cores. However, it's fundamentally very dangerous, and nowadays, virtually no one even tries. Only someone completely and utterly confident in their spirit enhancement abilities could attempt it successfully. It's basically like creating something from

nothing!

“If the spirit enhancer successfully forms the Will Core, he will experience incredible good fortune afterward. But if he fails, he will be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!”

Upon hearing the explanation, a tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and he suddenly realized he had sensed a form of utter confidence within the mist inside Big Fatty Zhang. Suddenly, a look of regret appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face.

“Will Core....” He couldn’t help but think back to the Spirit Stream Sect, and how he had tricked Big Fatty Zhang into thinking he had succeeded, all to prevent his feelings from being hurt. From that moment on, Big Fatty Zhang’s journey along the path of spirit enhancement had completely changed.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun realized that Big Fatty Zhang’s path of spirit enhancement was closely related to his confidence, and that his confidence had been significantly affected by Bai Xiaochun himself.

“You guys keep feeding him as much life force as you can. I’m going to get a Nascent Soul Daoist master!” With one final glance at Big Fatty Zhang’s dwindling aura, Bai Xiaochun raced out of the immortal’s cave and headed toward the Hall of Devil Slayers.

Master God-Diviner and Chen Manyao immediately began to pour life force into Big Fatty Zhang, as did Xu Baocai, who had only just arrived.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were bloodshot as he raced along, his mind empty except for a single thought: he could not allow Big Fatty Zhang to die!!

A whistling sound echoed out in all directions on Sky Quarter Rainbow as he shot at top speed toward the Hall of Devil Slayers.

The Hall of Devil Slayers was some distance from Big Fatty Zhang’s immortal’s cave, and Bai Xiaochun couldn’t have been

more anxious. Therefore, he used as much speed as possible, unleashing the Mountain Shaking Bash and also relying on the power of the Undying Tendons in his left leg.

Before long, he was nearing the Hall of Devil Slayers. However, it was at that point that, just up ahead, five cultivators were being blocked from passing through the area.

The people blocking their path were three disciples wearing long green robes, with cold expressions on their faces. When they saw Bai Xiaochun hurrying in their direction, one of them realized who he was, and hesitated a moment before calling out,

“You there, get back! This whole 500-kilometer area is set aside for our Young Lord’s personal cultivation!”

“Yeah. Our Young Lord is Sima Feiru!” Apparently, they thought that uttering the name Sima Feiru would be a huge threat. After all, this was essentially the same thing they said to anyone who tried to pass through this area.

Quite a few people on Sky Quarter Rainbow were familiar with Sima Feiru. After all, he ranked 97 in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. As a member of the top 100, he was extremely famous!

At any other time, when he was in his usual mood, Bai Xiaochun would never have bickered with these people about being able to pass through. But at the moment, his heart was on fire because of the situation with Big Fatty Zhang, and he had absolutely no patience. He couldn’t have cared less if Sima Feiru had the area locked down. In fact, if an even more famous Chosen had done the same thing, he still wouldn’t have taken the time to go around!

At this moment, every breath of time counted. Completely ignoring the three green-robed disciples, he continued onward at top speed.

The three disciples’ faces flickered, and one of them said, “How dare—”

However, before he could finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun roared, “Beat it!”

Instantly, a wild wind sprang up, and the three disciples’ ears filled with deafening rumbling sounds as an incredible force smashed into them, forcing them off to the side as Bai Xiaochun shot past them into Sima Feiru’s sealed, 500-kilometer land.

Almost immediately, a powerful aura erupted from a deep cistern within that 500-kilometer area.

“Who dares to interrupt my cultivation!?!?” Along with the voice which echoed out, a magical technique was unleashed that caused a huge face to appear above the cistern. It was the face of a young man, twisted in rage.

This person was none other than Sima Feiru!

Chapter 433: Twelve Hours

In the moment that Sima Feiru's voice echoed out, a burst of late Core Formation cultivation base power erupted out from the cistern.

Simultaneously, ten figures shot up into the air from various directions, which were none other than Sima Feiru's followers. Cold smiles could be seen on all of their faces; clearly, they were confident that anyone who disturbed their Young Lord's cultivation would meet a grisly fate.

This was not the first time Sima Feiru had staked claim to a cultivation area, nor was it the first time someone had attempted to interfere with him when he did. However, nobody had ever been successful in an attempt to drive him away, and everyone always ended up backing down.

As for Bai Xiaochun, in his anxiety and rage, his eyes flickered with cold light as he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and pointed down at the freezing cistern.

"Shut up!" he shouted, unleashing the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation through his right index finger. Instantly, frigid qi that bordered on the Frigid Master level shot down.

Even as Sima Feiru prepared to burst out of his cistern, the frigid qi poured down like a beam of light, slamming into the water. Instantly, cracking sounds rang out, and the entire cistern was frozen solid!

Not only was the cistern frozen, but the gigantic face was as well, and even Sima Feiru as he prepared to burst out into the open.

Sima Feiru's face fell; before he could even struggle, he was locked in place, and the terrifying frigid qi that entered him turned him into a statue of ice....

His mouth was stuck open, and his eyes were wide with complete

and utter disbelief.

As for his followers in the area, they all gasped, and their eyes went wide.

“How... how is this possible?!?!”

“Is that Bai Xiaochun? Heavens! He only ranks in the 490s, doesn’t he? I can’t believe he sealed Sima Feiru with the single wave of a finger!!”

Sima Feiru’s followers were left with minds spinning as Bai Xiaochun flew past them.

Considering his speed, it didn’t take him long to reach the Hall of Devil Slayers, which he entered without the slightest hesitation. Outside, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t extremely famous, but inside the Hall of Devil Slayers, everyone treated him with the utmost respect. Because of how Feng Youde cared for him, Bai Xiaochun could do virtually anything he wanted. Nobody dared to interfere with him at all, and within moments, he was in front of the main temple.

Upon entering the temple, he immediately caught sight of Feng Youde sitting at the far end. Hurrying over, he clasped hands and bowed deeply. “Bai Xiaochun offers greetings, Daoist Master! Daoist Master, I beg of you to save a life!!”

“What’s wrong this time?” Feng Youde said, a bit begrudgingly.

Bai Xiaochun quickly explained the situation with Big Fatty Zhang, and continued to beg for Feng Youde’s help, bowing over and over again at the waist as he did so.

Feng Youde’s expression soon turned serious. He had never seen Bai Xiaochun acting so earnestly. After hearing the situation, he thought for a moment, and then frowned.

“A Will Core, huh? Very well, I’ll go take a look.” With that, he rose to his feet. Even as Bai Xiaochun continued to bow and scrape, Feng Youde flicked his sleeve, taking Bai Xiaochun away with him

in a teleportation.

When they reappeared, they were about 500 kilometers away, whereupon they teleported again. That put them outside of Big Fatty Zhang's immortal's cave. To see a teleportation magic like that with his own eyes left Bai Xiaochun shaken, and at the same time, a bit envious.

Feng Youde led the way into Big Fatty Zhang's immortal's cave, where Master God-Diviner, Chen Manyao, and Xu Baocai were waiting. When they saw that Bai Xiaochun had brought Feng Youde with him, they quickly bowed and backed away.

Feng Youde cared about Bai Xiaochun, but not the others, so he paid them absolutely no attention. Walking over to Big Fatty Zhang, he put his hand onto his forehead and sent some divine sense into him. After inspecting him for a moment, his expression turned even more grave than before.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that, his heart began to pound, and his face drained of blood.

"It really is a Will Core...." Feng Youde said, withdrawing his hand and frowning. Sighing, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun. "Half a month ago, I might have been able to help. But at this point, he's a candle flickering in the wind, only a step away from death. I simply don't have the power to save him."

Bai Xiaochun felt like he had been hit with a sledgehammer. His heart was pounding, and his face was pale white as he staggered backward a few paces. Grief filled him, pushing him to the point where he felt like he was going to collapse.

Almost immediately, he began to think back to all his memories of Big Fatty Zhang.

"Isn't there some other way?" he said, looking over at the corpse-like Big Fatty Zhang.

"Who is he to you?" Feng Youde asked, a profound light gleaming

in his eyes.

“He’s my Eldest Brother!” Bai Xiaochun replied. From the look in his eyes, he would clearly pay any price to save Big Fatty Zhang. Feng Youde was shaken by the level of determination he saw.

Up to this point, he had only been watching out for Bai Xiaochun because of the promise given him by the Heavenspan emissary. But now, after seeing the look in his eyes, he could sense a level of sentiment in Bai Xiaochun that he hadn’t seen for quite some time.

“Who would have thought that this kid would care so much about his friends...?” he murmured inwardly. Based on the level of his cultivation base, and his years of experience, he could tell that Bai Xiaochun was not putting on a show.

After a moment of thought, he inspected Big Fatty Zhang more thoroughly. Enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, whereupon he said, “You might still have a chance to save your Eldest Brother. However, the help of a Nascent Soul cultivator won’t do it. You would need a Deva Realm cultivator from the Senior generation. Either that, or the power of a deva. Only then could the chaos surrounding the Will Core be nullified, and the core fully formed!”

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes began to shine with bright light. Without the slightest hesitation, he said, “The power of a deva? How do I get that?! I’ll pay all of my merit points if I have to!”

Even Master God-Diviner, Chen Manyao, and Xu Baocai could sense the unswerving determination in his voice.

Feng Youde shook his head. “The power of a deva can come only when an almighty deva gathers some of his or her aura into a talisman, transforming it into a disposable magical item. Usually, devas will give such talismans to their apprentices as a form of protection.

“Such items take years to craft, and are astronomically valuable. They’re not the type of thing you can purchase with merit points.”

Master God-Diviner sucked in a breath and exchanged a glance with Xu Baocai. Based on what they had just heard, it didn’t seem like ordinary disciples would ever be able to get that type of item, something which was normally reserved for the apprentices of devas.

Bai Xiaochun turned even more ashen than before, and yet, he now had hope.

“If you want to get the power of a deva,” Feng Youde continued, “you would have to take a deva as your Master. Either that, or challenge the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials, and reach the violet section of the rainbow. At that point, you would receive a boon from the sect, and could request the power of a deva!”

“The violet section of the rainbow?” Xu Baocai said faintly. “Is that even possible...?”

Despite having only been in the rainbow district for a short time, Xu Baocai had learned a bit about the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, and he knew that reaching the violet portion of the rainbow was indescribably difficult.

The violet trial by fire was the final trial, and in the current generation of disciples, there had long since been only eight in that group. It was only recently that Gongsun Wan’er had become the ninth.

If someone else reached that level, there would be ten!

Xu Baocai wasn’t the only one to be taken aback. Master God-Diviner and Chen Manyao were also shocked. Although all of them had confidence in Bai Xiaochun, when they heard that he needed to get the power of a deva by reaching the violet portion of the rainbow, their faces fell.

Bai Xiaochun stood there quietly for a few breaths of time, then

looked up. “How much time do I have?”

Feng Youde sighed. “You’ve made up your mind, then. Very well. I’ll take your Eldest Brother back to the Hall of Devil Slayers to watch over him. Even still, you’ll have no more than twelve hours!”

The look in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes turned as sharp as the edge of blade. “Many thanks, Daoist Master. I’ll leave this instant!”

Without even the slightest hint of hesitation, he turned, rushed out of the immortal’s cave, and sped toward the teleportation portal!

Chapter 434: Challenging The Trials Again!

“Twelve hours....” Bai Xiaochun thought as he sped across Sky Quarter Rainbow. As of this moment, his veins of steel were pulsing, and he seemed ready to risk his life and fight to the death!

He couldn't just let Big Fatty Zhang die, nor any of his other friends. He knew that the cultivation world was a brutal place, and that he was relatively powerless to alter the course of major events, but he still couldn't give up. Back when war had been on the cusp of breaking out between the Spirit and Blood Stream Sects, he hadn't given up. Back during the fight between the River-Defying Sect and the Sky River Court, he hadn't given up. Back during the fighting at the Mountain of Legacy Seals, he hadn't given up.

And neither would he give up now!

That was his way of walking the path of immortal cultivation. That was his decision. That was what was important to him!

Bai Xiaochun drew upon all the power of his cultivation base to shoot at top speed toward the teleportation portal. Then, he sped through Myriad Star Rainbow toward the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials.

From the moment he busted open the door of Big Fatty Zhang's immortal's cave to the moment he reached the entrance of the trials, only two incense sticks' worth of time had passed. Currently, a few hundred cultivators were gathered there. Many of them spent a lot of time at the entrance, watching the performances of others in the hopes of improving their own chances of success.

There was quite a din of conversation in the area, but as soon as Bai Xiaochun appeared, he was noticed by some of the gathered cultivators. After all, his previous charge all the way to the 400s had been an unusual event that drew a lot of attention.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

“He’s back! How long has it been?”

“I’ve heard of this guy. People said he was really irritated at his last performance, and that the next time he challenged the trials, he would definitely rise in the rankings!” Everyone began to look over at Bai Xiaochun, which would normally cause him to slow down and relish the praise. But he wasn’t in the mood for that now. His expression was grim, and he even radiated a murderous aura as he shot past the crowds and into the entrance, not pausing for a moment!

When challenging the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials, one had to start all over from the beginning. That was a standard rule that no one could change. Regardless of the fact that Bai Xiaochun’s star was high up on the cyan portion of the rainbow, he still had to start from the first trial.

His vision swam, and when things became clear again, a blast of heat hit his face. Without pause, he leapt off of the cliff and dropped down toward the sea of lava.

As soon as he touched the surface of the lava, his eyes glittered, and he unleashed all of the speed he was capable of. Rumbling sounds echoed out as he shot forward, causing huge waves to roll out on the sea of lava. He almost seemed to be running along a flat surface, which, combined with his murderous aura, caused all the other trial-takers in the area to gasp.

Meanwhile, some in the crowd outside were already spending merit points to watch Bai Xiaochun’s performance. Of those, most had expected him to do the same thing he had last time, and swim through the lava. Therefore, the scene playing out now cause their hearts to seize with shock, and almost immediately, people began to cry out in shock. That in turn caused more people to start watching him challenge the trials.

“He’s doing something different from the first time. He’s actually

running on top of the lava!”

“Heavens! It was shocking enough when Gongsun Wan’er killed her way across, but seeing Bai Xiaochun run on the surface of the sea is equally astonishing!”

As everyone outside cried out in shock, Bai Xiaochun proceeded forward with a grim expression on his face, not reducing his speed at all, and in fact, accelerating. He only used a bit more time than it takes half an incense stick to burn to cross the entire sea of lava, step onto the far shore, and enter the second trial!

In the second trial, the stone golems were still fighting fiercely. Boulders rained from the sky, and fierce winds swept about. However, Bai Xiaochun didn’t stop for even a moment!

None of the obstacles in the challenge seemed to affect him at all, and all of them actually crumbled before even touching him!

However, that almost didn’t count for anything compared to the most shocking development of all. To the astonishment of the crowd, the two enormous stone golems actually stopped fighting when they noticed Bai Xiaochun!

“Get me through this place!” Bai Xiaochun said, calling upon the power of the Living Mountain Incantation. Although he didn’t summon his own stone golem, the aura of the incantation itself was enough that the stone golems could sense it. To them, it felt very familiar, almost as if something or someone was communicating with them.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun asked for help getting through the trial, it was to the utter astonishment of the crowds that one of the stone golems actually reached down toward Bai Xiaochun, not to attack him, but to grab him and throw him through the air toward the exit.

Explosive rumblings sounds could be heard as Bai Xiaochun was propelled by the full power of the stone golem, transforming into

something like a shooting star that pierced through the air of the second trial and right into the teleportation portal leading to the third trial!

He had passed through the first and second trials in less time than it takes an incense stick to burn!

Everyone on the outside was going mad with astonishment.

“Heavens! This... this Bai Xiaochun....”

“He was actually holding back last time!!”

By now, the cultivators outside were starting to send messages to their friends, causing more and more cultivators to pay attention to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trial.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was already in the third trial, the one that featured the enormous blacksmith and ironworks. Currently, the enormous sword that was the path to the exit was being beaten by the blacksmith with his hammer.

Just like before, Bai Xiaochun didn't hesitate for a moment. Instead of trying to make his way across the sword, he dove right down into the frigid sea below!

This time, he didn't absorb any frigid qi, but instead, drew upon his own frigid qi to freeze everything in the area. Then, just like he had done with the sea of lava, he began speeding across the surface.

Something different happened in this trial, though. Almost as soon as the huge blacksmith noticed Bai Xiaochun in the frigid sea, his expression twisted with rage as he recalled what had occurred last time.

Roaring, he reached down with his huge hand to grab Bai Xiaochun.

As the hand bore down, Bai Xiaochun's murderous aura spiked, and instead of dodging, he drew upon his Undying Live Forever

Technique, and especially the fleshly body power in the Undying Tendons of his left leg. Then, just before the hand grabbed him, he managed to kick off of it, causing incredible rumbling sounds to echo out. Blood sprayed out of his mouth from the force, but he managed to make use of it to accelerate, and fly at top speed toward the exit.

As for the hand, it stopped in place, the veins stretching out from the point of the kick's impact apparently having been sealed. The hand was temporarily locked in place, causing the blacksmith to roar in rage. Then he slowly clenched his hand into a fist, causing many of the veins to burst before he regained motion.

However, in that short period of time, Bai Xiaochun disappeared into the exit. Again, he didn't even use the time it takes an incense stick to burn!

As of this moment, he was in the fourth trial!

The green trial had the bridge of lightning. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't appear to be fazed by the lightning at all, and instantly proceeded forward with incredible speed. Lightning slammed into him, but he didn't slow down at all. No matter how the lightning inundated him, his speed wasn't reduced, and in less time than it takes an incense stick to burn, he was at the end of the trial.

When he disappeared into the exit, the people in the audience looked on in stunned silence.

"He only used two incense sticks' worth of time to pass the first four trials. Heavens...."

"How much was he holding back last time? This speed is unbelievable!"

"He's crushing the trials even more than Gongsun Wan'er. This is crazy!"

"He's heading into the cyan trial now. Last time, that was where

he stopped....”

Everyone seemed to think that there was something strange going on with Bai Xiaochun, but didn't put too much thought into it. They were all very curious to see how he fared in the cyan trial.

The cyan trial was a world of vengeful souls and endless gravestones. As soon as Bai Xiaochun appeared, cyan smoke rose up, and countless terrifying souls appeared. Staring at Bai Xiaochun, they let loose heaven-shaking, earth-shattering howls.

Chapter 435: The Power Of The Soul

Convergence Pill!

The sight of so many vengeful souls left Bai Xiaochun shivering a bit. Ghosts filled him with indescribable fear, and yet, right now he had no other option available but to face them.

“Shut up!” he yelled with just as much rage as all the howling vengeful souls. Time was of the essence at the moment, and the only thing that occupied his thoughts at the moment was that he only had twelve hours to get to the violet trial by fire.

Big Fatty Zhang’s life was on the line!

Even as Bai Xiaochun yelled at the souls, they flew into the air toward him. As for Bai Xiaochun, he didn’t back down, nor did he slow his pace. Instead, he shot directly toward the vengeful souls.

Outside, the cultivators of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect looked on, their eyes glued to the scene playing out in front of them. All of them were incredibly intent on seeing how Bai Xiaochun tackled the cyan trial.

“It looks like this Bai Xiaochun is going to use some sort of divine ability or something....”

“This trial tests how long you can stand up to the bombardment of the vengeful souls, and how many you can take out. Anyone who wants to last any length of time has to be very careful about their spiritual power, and not waste a single bit. It requires a lot of control.”

“Gongsun Wan’er pulled off something of a miracle. The vengeful souls didn’t dare to actually fight her, although the effect didn’t do anything to the soul emperor. Even still, something like that never happened before in history.”

“I wonder how many souls this Bai Xiaochun will take out....”

Even as the discussions played out in the audience, Bai Xiaochun was inside the cyan trial, rocketing toward the incoming vengeful souls at top speed.

From a distance, it looked like a sea of souls, shaking heaven and earth as they screamed through the air.

However, in the moment before that sea crashed into Bai Xiaochun, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a medicinal pill.

It was white, and didn't emit any medicinal aroma. In fact, it didn't seem to be extraordinary in any way. As for the audience, they were stunned, and couldn't imagine why Bai Xiaochun would possibly pull out a medicinal pill at this critical moment.

But then, Bai Xiaochun hurled the pill down toward the ground, simultaneously shouting, "Take this!"

The instant the pill hit the ground, it shattered, sending invisible ripples spreading out in all directions. At the same time, the faces of the incoming vengeful souls flickered as they suddenly changed directions and flew down toward the location of the shattered pill. Apparently, their soul bodies were completely beyond their own control!

Some sort of indescribably powerful gravitational force had appeared, which sucked in the vengeful souls, crushing them together. First it was ten, then a hundred, then a thousand, and then ten thousand!

Almost instantly, an opening appeared within the sea of souls, right in front of Bai Xiaochun. At the same time, more than 10,000 souls were sucked down toward the ground, screaming the entire time. In the blink of an eye, a black, fist-sized sphere took shape!

Within that glowing sphere were more than 10,000 vengeful souls!

The audience members' minds were spinning, and they looked

on with wide eyes as Bai Xiaochun flew forward without pausing for a moment. As he did, he produced another of his Soul Convergence Pills.

Every time he threw out one of the pills, all of the souls in the area would be sucked into a black, glowing sphere. Gradually, the vengeful souls grew fewer and fewer as more and more black spheres appeared, each of them filled with numerous screaming souls, none of whom could escape.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun saw the enormous soul emperor in the middle of the cyan trial by fire. Unleashing his cultivation base power, the soul emperor shot toward Bai Xiaochun and howled, “Begone from this place!”

Power erupted from the soul emperor, causing the sky to dim, and yet, Bai Xiaochun simply waved his right hand, throwing out dozens of Soul Convergence Pills at the same time.

“Take this!” he shouted. As the pills exploded, the howling soul emperor’s face suddenly filled with disbelief and shock.

Without any warning, his body suddenly split up into dozens of parts, all of which were sucked away and sealed by the medicinal pills....

Bai Xiaochun didn’t even pay attention to the result. Instead, he continued to speed here and there, tossing out medicinal pills. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn... the cyan trial by fire which had caused problems for countless cultivators in the past... was devoid of even a single vengeful soul.

Bai Xiaochun sped past countless gravestones toward the far end of the trial by fire, and then vanished into the exit.

The spectators outside were trembling in shock. They had had their speculations about what would happen, but never could any of them have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would use a shocking method like this to pass the trial!

From ancient times until the present, no one had ever done anything like it. Everyone knew that the point of this trial was to exterminate as many vengeful souls as possible, and yet, as of this moment, the trial was completely empty....

“Th-this... this....”

“I thought Gongsun Wan’er’s performance was spectacular. I never thought that this Bai Xiaochun... would actually surpass her!”

“The vengeful souls didn’t dare to attack Gongsun Wan’er, and she fought to a draw with the soul emperor. But Bai Xiaochun... he actually absorbed the soul emperor....”

Soon, a deathly silence fell over the audience. Bai Xiaochun’s run through the trials was doing much the same as Gongsun Wan’er’s. The entire sect was shaken as word spread, and more people began to turn their attention toward the trials.

Back on Sky Quarter Rainbow, in the main temple in the Hall of Devil Slayers, Big Fatty Zhang was sitting cross-legged just like he had been before. By this point, he was completely without consciousness, and the flame of his life force was almost gone. Were Feng Youde not there to bolster him, that flame would already have flickered out.

Outside of the temple, Xu Baocai and Master God-Diviner were watching the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials, along with Chen Manyao. All of them were completely shaken by what Bai Xiaochun was pulling off.

The other disciples in the sect didn’t really know Bai Xiaochun, but they did. Given his personality, they knew that he normally wouldn’t take risks like this. Everything he was doing was for the sake of Big Fatty Zhang.

As the news about Bai Xiaochun spread, shaking the sect, he appeared within the blue trial by fire. In total, he had used only a

bit more than an hour to pass all five of the previous trials, and yet, that was not a reason for him to relax. He was now at the final challenge, after which he would be able to enter the violet stage.

In terms of ranking, he didn't care about that, and wasn't even thinking of it. However, he knew that this trial would be the most difficult.

After all, his opponent here would be... Gongsun Wan'er!

Or, more precisely, a statue of Gongsun Wan'er!

The dimension in which the blue trial took place wasn't large, only about 30,000 meters across. Beyond those borders, everything was a blur. Within the very center of the 30,000-meter area was a lone statue depicting a young woman. She was beautiful, but there was something strange about her; she pulsed with a frigid aura that caused everything around her to turn a light blue color.

At almost the exact same instant that Bai Xiaochun appeared, the statue's eyes opened, revealing an intense coldness as they locked onto Bai Xiaochun.

That gaze was like a pair of knives stabbing into Bai Xiaochun's own eyes and piercing into his mind. A tremor ran through him, along with an intense sensation of deadly crisis.

He had fought once with Gongsun Wan'er, long ago. However, after returning from the Blood Stream Sect, he had always felt that there was something very strange about her, although he couldn't quite put his finger on what that was. Because of that, he had always avoided her.

At long last, in this blue trial by fire, he would be tangling with her once again. Although this was only a statue representing her, Bai Xiaochun knew that it would attack him with the full power that Gongsun Wan'er had used when she challenged the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials.

Furthermore, he knew that unless Gongsun Wan'er had held

back during her own fight, this statue would be just as powerful as she was in real life. Although it wouldn't be quite as intelligent as she was, because it wasn't a real life-form, it wouldn't sense any pain. In the end, the statue's strong points would cancel out its weak points, and vice versa.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun's gaze locked with Gongsun Wan'er's, her body blurred, and four versions of herself appeared, almost like clones. Incantation gestures flashed, and they all waved their fingers in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Instantly, four streams of light shot toward him, each one a different color. As they streamed through the air, they intersected with each other, forming into an ice flower with four petals, each one a different color. Then, the flower began to rotate rapidly as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

As it passed along, the ground beneath the spinning flower froze up, and the temperature dropped rapidly, until cracking sounds rang out in all directions....

On each of the four flower petals was a face that resembled Gongsun Wan'er, smiling in enigmatic and bizarre fashion. Bai Xiaochun was even sure that he could hear sinister chuckling.

Despite the hair-raisingly terrifying smiles, Bai Xiaochun knew that there was no time to ponder the situation. Drawing upon his Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then shoved it out in front of him!

Chapter 436: Battling Gongsun Wan'er!

That simple gesture, backed by the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, as well as his Gold Core, caused frigid qi from the Frigid Adept level to surge out, distorting the air as it shot to meet the four-colored ice flower.

When they made contact, a huge boom echoed out in all directions. Three of the flower's petals shattered into ash, but the final one only grew larger, transforming into an ice blade that sliced through Bai Xiaochun's frigid qi and continued onward.

The shocking speed of the ice blade caused Bai Xiaochun's expression to flicker. After making contact with the ice flower, his Frigid Adept power had been almost completely sucked away, and as the ice blade neared, the intense cold caused his blood to begin to freeze up. Thankfully, in addition to his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, he also had his Undying Heavenly King Core, which vibrated as it stimulated his fleshly body power.

As the ice blade neared, Bai Xiaochun howled and clenched his right hand into a fist, which he punched out at the ice blade.

A huge boom could be heard as the ice blade shattered into bits. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun coughed up a mouthful of blood and then looked down to see the flesh of his right hand shredded and bleeding. However, now was not the time to retreat. Instead, he blurred into motion, heading directly toward the statue of Gongsun Wan'er, unleashing more frigid qi and using his frigid shadows to perform a minor teleportation.

Shockingly, he appeared right in front of the expressionless Gongsun Wan'er, whereupon his left leg swept out in a kick, backed by the full fleshly body power of his Undying Tendons.

In the same moment that Bai Xiaochun attacked, Gongsun Wan'er, seemingly ignoring him, performed an incantation gesture with her left hand and then pushed her finger down onto

her forehead. As she did, a burst of frigid qi emerged that vastly surpassed that from before.

Everything around her instantly froze, and at the same time, an enormous ice hand materialized behind her, which shot toward Bai Xiaochun as if to grab him!

Bai Xiaochun had already sent his foot flying through the air with explosive power, so it smashed into the ice hand, destroying most of it. However, the hand still continued onward to slam into Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was sent spinning backward, blood spraying from his mouth. And yet, his eyes shone with ferocious light as he completely ignored his own injuries and once again summoned a frigid shadow as he prepared to teleport to safety.

As he did, his expression flickered as he realized that Gongsun Wan'er's frigid qi had formed something like a sealing power, a barrier that obstructed his ability to change locations with his frigid shadows.

As for the mostly destroyed ice hand, it quickly repaired itself, and then began to grow larger. In the blink of an eye, it was fully 300 meters tall, and once again began to rumble through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

Up to this point, Bai Xiaochun hadn't even been able to get close to Gongsun Wan'er, who currently stood behind the ice hand, staring at him coldly.

The ice hand closed in, growing larger the entire time, until it was more than 3,000 meters tall. Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted as he realized that he wasn't sure what to do at this point. For the entire time during this fight, he had been reacting, and had yet to take the initiative. If he couldn't turn things around, then he would surely meet defeat.

"So, you want to compete in terms of frigid qi...? Fine, let's do

it!” Anxiety for the safety of Big Fatty Zhang was the most important thing right now, so Bai Xiaochun knew that if he couldn’t defeat this statue of Gongsun Wan’er, he wouldn’t get into the violet trial. Therefore, he took a deep breath and then drew upon a vast amount of frigid qi from his Gold Core, all of which he converged upon his right hand, causing it to turn a deep blue color.

Then, he shoved his blue hand directly toward the ground!

“Frigid... mountain!!” Rumbling sounds echoed out as the frigid qi exploded downward toward the ground, causing a mountain of ice to form, and freezing everything in the area.

Even as the ice hand closed in, the mountain of ice rose up hundreds of meters into the air. Then, the two forces met.

He was drawing upon so much frigid qi that his qi passageways were pulsing with pain, and yet, he didn’t seem to notice. He was drawing upon virtually all of the frigid qi his Gold Core was capable of, completely regardless of the consequences. It almost seemed like an insane suicide attack!

The ice mountain continued to grow rapidly, until it was also 3,000 meters tall. That was when the ice hand reached it!

“Detonate!!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, his eyes bloodshot.

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

The ice hand shattered and the ice mountain exploded, sending a powerful shockwave out in all directions. Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun’s mouth as he was sent tumbling backward, and for the first time... the statue of Gongsun Wan’er was harmed by Bai Xiaochun seemingly insane attack.

Popping sounds emanated out as a tremor ran through her. Shockingly, Gongsun Wan’er’s forehead split open, a crack that ran all the way down to her mouth, and was completely terrifying in appearance.

The battle had only just begun, but had already reached a completely shocking level. Everyone watching outside was glued to the action, especially because of the fact that Gongsun Wan'er had only recently become famous by breaking into the top 10. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base was only in the mid Gold Core stage, putting him at a clear disadvantage. Everyone watching the fight was completely shocked.

“Mid Gold Core stage versus late Gold Core! This Bai Xiaochun... has really been hiding his strength!”

“He has frigid qi, and so does Gongsun Wan'er. This battle is going to be determined by who has better control!”

“I never thought that this Bai Xiaochun... would get so far!”

All of the top 100 Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars who heard about the matter were moved, and instantly stopped whatever type of cultivation they were currently practicing to watch.

Fights like this were not often seen, and in fact, even the superstars in the top 10 came out of their immortal's caves to observe.

In the battlefield that was the blue trial by fire, Bai Xiaochun was gasping for breath as he stared at the statue of Gongsun Wan'er. Gongsun Wan'er had used frigid qi when he fought her back in the Spirit Stream Sect, but her control of it in this battle was on a completely different level. She used it with a finesse that left Bai Xiaochun completely shocked.

He wasn't sure what method she used to cultivate frigid qi, but however she did it, the results were astonishing, and seemed to surpass his own Frigid Adept powers. In addition to that, their cultivation bases were not on the same level. He was in the mid Gold Core stage, and despite how close he was to a breakthrough, he was not in the late stage.

As for Gongsun Wan'er, considering the fluctuations of her

cultivation base, it was obvious... that she was in late Core Formation!

“It doesn’t matter,” he said, his eyes glittering with cold light. “I have to win this fight!” He had just used all of the frigid qi at his disposal in a near-suicidal attack, which had resulted in wounding his opponent. As of now, the situation was different than before, and this was the moment in which he needed to clinch a victory.

With that, he blurred into motion, using the fleshly body power of his left leg to shoot forward at incredible speed. As he did, he slapped his bag of holding, causing numerous flying swords to emerge, all of which had received multiple spirit enhancements. At the same time, a flash of black light could be seen, which was none other than his Renegade Dragon Horn!

The Renegade Dragon Horn formed the center of a sword formation that descended like rain toward the statue of Gongsun Wan’er. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun’s right hand shot out in a gripping motion that flashed with black light: the Throat Crushing Grasp!

However, even as the sword formation descend onto Gongsun Wan’er, the statue’s eyes flashed and her right hand shot up, ripping into her own throat and then, in completely shocking fashion... dragging a spine-like bone sword out of her own body!!

As the bone sword appeared out in the open, a sound like that of countless screaming souls filled the entire blue trial by fire. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was instantly filled with a sense of profound and deadly danger.

Everyone on the outside devolved into cries of shock and astonishment.

At the same time, the statue of Gongsun Wan’er didn’t hesitate for even an instant before slashing the bone sword viciously toward Bai Xiaochun’s incoming sword formation!

The air shattered around the bone sword, as though heaven and earth were about to be destroyed. Everything in the area turned black, with the starkly white bone of the sword shone so brightly that it became the only light in the dimension.

One by one, the flying swords began to shatter into pieces, until only the Renegade Dragon Horn was left. Even that couldn't last for very long before cracks spread out on its surface and it began to collapse. In the final moment, it was sent spinning off to the side as the bone sword slashed toward Bai Xiaochun with shocking power!

“So, this is your trump card, huh?!” Bai Xiaochun murmured, his pupils constricting. At the same time, he slapped his bag of holding, causing a black scale to fly out and block the path of the bone sword. Simultaneously, he took a deep breath and then stretched both hands out wide before pushing them down toward the ground. Eyes shining with bizarre light, it was with the softest of voices that he said, “Waterswamp!”

Chapter 437: The Kingdom Crushes The Statue

In the same moment that Bai Xiaochun spoke, the 30,000-meter frozen area suddenly filled with piercing pulses of moisture, water vapor so thick that it made it difficult to see!

From a distance, that 30,000-meter area seemed to have been transformed into a frozen swamp!

Bai Xiaochun's hair whipped around him as a burst of energy surged out from beneath his feet!

At the same time, a brutal and wild aura erupted out, along with a roar that seemed to echo from ancient times, something that left all onlookers' minds spinning.

ROAR!!

It wasn't just the cultivators watching the fight who heard the sound; even cultivators in other areas could hear the echoing cry of some beast!

Disciples throughout the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect looked around with flickering expressions, and many of them even cried out in alarm.

“What was that!?”

“Did you guys hear that? What type of beast makes a sound like that?!?”

“Heavens! Even though we're outside of the trial by fire, we can still hear it! What kind of divine ability does that?!?”

Meanwhile, on Starry Quarter Rainbow, there was a bright red mountain that rose high into the sky. At the top of the mountain was a young woman with hair like fire, sitting there meditating. She was very beautiful, and seemed to be surrounded by shapeless, invisible flames that would instantly eradicate anyone who got too

close to her.

Moments before, she had been completely focused on meditation, and hadn't been paying attention to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials. But as soon as the beast roar echoed out, she detected it, and her expression flickered as she looked over in the direction of Myriad Star Rainbow.

“And here I thought Gongsun Wan'er would be the only one to make it onto the violet portion of the rainbow before the soul-hunting expedition. Apparently, I was wrong.”

That young woman occupied 3rd place among the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, Chen Yueshan!

She wasn't the only one who noticed what was happening. In a deep cistern on Polarity Quarter Rainbow was a bare-chested young man with thin lips and cold eyes. He seemed like the completely merciless type, and was currently fighting a fierce battle with a host of vengeful souls. Despite the fierce attacks of the souls, they were being efficiently exterminated by the young man.

As soon as the roar echoed out, he stopped in place and looked up, his eyes shining with mysterious light.

“It doesn't matter how many people get onto the violet portion of the rainbow. When the soul-hunting expedition begins, I'll kill anyone who gets in my way!”

This young man was one of the top superstars in the sect, who ranked even higher than Chen Yueshan. He occupied 2nd place, and was known by the Daoist name Heretic!

Considering that the roar was so powerful even people outside of the trial heard it, there was little need to mention how it affected the statue of Gongsun Wan'er. Her eyes began to shine brightly, and instead of backing up, she propelled the bone sword toward Bai Xiaochun with even greater speed than before.

As it pierced through the air, it emitted ear-splitting whistling sounds!

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's murderous aura skyrocketed as he shoved his hands high into the air and shouted, "... Kingdom!!"

Ear-splitting rumbling sounds spread out as the entire 30,000-meter area turned into a huge, watery swamp. Then, an indescribably large spike rose up like a mountain out of the ground, filling the entire world. Beneath the enormous spike, it was possible to see black, scaled skin!!

In addition, there were more spikes spreading out all over the creature below. The 30,000-meter area was actually like a window, allowing only a glimpse at the shockingly large beast beneath!

As soon as the first huge spike appeared, it smashed into the statue of Gongsun Wan'er, causing indescribable rumbling sounds to echo out. Everyone watching the scene gasped, and as for those who ranked higher in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, they seemed to be the most shocked of all. That was especially true of Chen Yueshan and Heretic, both of whom looked on with widening eyes.

Deafening rumbling sounds filled the entire blue trial by fire, sounds which surpassed heavenly thunder. It was almost like two continents colliding, releasing a destructive shockwave that instantly shattered Gongsun Wan'er's bone sword into countless fragments.

At the same time, her statue dimmed and was covered with countless cracks, as though it might collapse at any moment as she sped backward in retreat. However, her bone sword was by no means ordinary in any way. Despite its physical form having been destroyed, its sword qi still existed, and it actually pierced all the way through the huge bone spike to Bai Xiaochun.

This was the first time anyone had ever pierced his Waterswamp Kingdom, and the sword qi moved so quickly that he had no time

to evade it.

When the sword qi hit him, blood sprayed out of his mouth, and his entire body was wracked with pain. Whether it was his bones or his flesh, he felt like he was about to explode, and he tumbled backward like a kite with its string cut.

Apparently, these two opponents were evenly matched, and had just seriously injured each other!!

Everyone on the outside felt their hearts being battered by waves of shock. Not only were they completely shaken by Bai Xiaochun's magical technique, but they were filled with fervor from being able to watch this most ultimate of Core Formation battles!

It was easy to imagine how, even if Bai Xiaochun ended up losing in the end, he would still become quite the center of attention!

"Both of them are almost on the same level as Nascent Soul experts!"

"Gongsun Wan'er is already in the late Core Formation stage, but this Bai Xiaochun is only in mid Core Formation!"

"I asked around, and apparently Bai Xiaochun is from the River-Defying Sect in the Middle Reaches, and so is Gongsun Wan'er! Heavens! I can't believe the River-Defying Sect is so incredible. Both of the hostages they sent are completely heaven-defying!!"

As everyone discussed the events playing out, back inside the blue trial by fire, the cracked statue of Gongsun Wan'er looked up, her eyes shining with cold light. Then she reached up and placed her palm onto her forehead.

A pop could be heard as her forehead collapsed, and more cracks spread out over her body. However, by opening her forehead, she apparently drew on the truly frigid coldness of her life essence, which erupted out with utter madness.

As the frigid qi spread out, cracking sounds could be heard, and everything around the Gongsun Wan'er statue was frozen. Within

the blink of an eye, she transformed into an enormous ice giant, dozens of meters tall.

If all that happened was that she became an ice giant, it might not have been a big deal. However, as she grew in size, a frigid qi began to swirl around her that seemed lethally cold, dropping the temperature in the 30,000-meter area so rapidly that, in the blink of an eye, everything was completely frozen!

The frigid qi was so powerful that even the air froze, and the land began to crack to pieces!

In fact, the only sound to be heard in the dimension were the popping sounds of everything freezing up!

Furthermore, Gongsun Wan'er was only continuing to grow larger!

“Frigid Extermination!” Everyone on the outside was so shaken that even the Nascent Soul experts were watching the fight, some of whom recognized where Gongsun Wan'er's frigid qi actually came from, leading to exclamations of astonishment.

As more and more of the Nascent Soul cultivators picked up on the clues, their expressions flickered with shock. Even the sect leader of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect emerged from his secluded meditation facilities to watch the fight.

If they had such reactions, there was little need to even consider how everyone else was reacting. Within the blue trial by fire, Bai Xiaochun's face fell as he sensed the exterminating power of the frigid qi. He could tell that, within moments, he would be frozen solid, killed in body and soul!

“Dammit! How did Gongsun Wan'er get frigid qi like this!?!?” In the critical moment, Bai Xiaochun looked around at everything rapidly freezing, and knew that he only had one option.

“Living Mountain Incantation!” As soon as the words left his mouth, the images of two stone golems appeared, one in each of

his eyes. At the same time, a stone golem began to take shape around him!!

After melding with the mountain, you become the mountain, and the mountain becomes you!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Bai Xiaochun was no longer visible. Instead, what everyone saw was an enormous stone golem dozens of meters high!

Instantly, the stone golem emitted an aura that would cause any Core Formation cultivator to be stricken with shock. Even the Nascent Soul cultivators were left gasping. As that energy surged out, it slammed into the frigid qi, resulting in a deafening explosion.

Soon, cultivators on the outside recognized what it was that they were seeing, causing cries of astonishment to echo out. Even the Nascent Soul cultivators were shaken.

“The Living Mountain Incantation!!”

Gongsun Wan'er's Frigid Extermination had been shocking enough, but then the Living Mountain Incantation was thrown into the mix, leaving everyone thoroughly flabbergasted.

“I can't believe someone actually succeeded in cultivating the Living Mountain Incantation!!”

“This Bai Xiaochun is completely incredible!!”

Even the sect leader had a very serious expression on his face.

Meanwhile, outside of the Ravine of Endless Mountains, Stonemountain sat there on the boulder, his eyes shining with a strange light. Apparently, his smile was one of excitement!

As of this moment, a huge ice giant was facing off against an enormous stone golem, and the energy emanating off of the two was causing the entire blue trial by fire to tremble violently.

“Die!!” Bai Xiaochun howled.

Chapter 438: Cultivation Base Breakthrough!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun shouted “die,” a scene of violent destruction played out in front of the eyes of all onlookers. Bai Xiaochun shot forward in a beam of blue light, drawing upon the Living Mountain Incantation and leaping forward with...

The Mountain Shaking Bash!

The strength of the stone golem bolstered Bai Xiaochun’s fleshly body, making it vastly more powerful than before, to a virtually indescribable degree. Furthermore, he moved so quickly that it almost seemed like a teleportation.

He pierced through the frigid qi, unleashing a series of sonic booms that crushed everything around him before appearing directly in front of Gongsun Wan’er!

The statue had already been seriously damaged, and of course, was only a statue, not the true Gongsun Wan’er. As such, it was completely incapable of dodging or evading the attack. Instead, her hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture as she attempted to block the strike!

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were bright red as he put everything on the line in this last-ditch effort. If he couldn’t secure victory at this point, then not only would he lose his chance to advance to the violet trial, but he would also be unable to rescue Big Fatty Zhang!

That was not an outcome he could accept.

There was only one thought in his mind....

“I have to win!!!” Howling, he closed in, using the stone golem’s body to launch a spinning kick with his left leg, which slammed directly into the ice giant summoned by Gongsun Wan’er’s statue.

The power of that kick was backed by the fleshly body power of

the Undying Live Forever Technique, as well as the Living Mountain Incantation and the Mountain Shaking Bash. Furthermore, it also contained his Undying Hex. It was... a devastatingly deadly attack!

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the foot sailed through the air, causing the entire blue trial by fire to tremble. The statue of Gongsun Wan'er attempted to use both arms to block the incoming left foot, but as soon as it made contact, the statue's arms began to collapse. Bai Xiaochun's foot smashed through them like a boulder crushing a drinking glass to land directly on the statue's chest!

Almost instantly, the statue's chest began to cave in, and then cracks spread out in all directions. However, the statue wasn't dead yet; all Bai Xiaochun had managed to do so far was destroy an outer layer of ice shields. Although the statue was seriously damaged, it was still able to defend itself.

However, as the statue fell back, Bai Xiaochun drew once again upon the power of the stone golem to launch into another Mountain Shaking Bash, fueling it further with the power of his left leg. This time, he sent the stone golem's hand shooting out, its thumb and forefinger glittering with black light.

It was none other than... the Throat Crushing Grasp!

Rumbling echoed out as the throat of the statue was crushed, and then... the entire statue began to fall apart....

The final move had come as fast as lightning, and was delivered with ruthless efficiency. In the blink of an eye, the ice giant was destroyed, and the statue shattered!

As that happened, a beam of teleportation light shot down, which was none other than the entrance to the violet trial!

Simultaneously, Bai Xiaochun's Living Mountain Incantation faded away, and the stone golem vanished. Bai Xiaochun was revealed in person, his face ashen as he floated down to the

ground. Clearly, he was having trouble standing, and even coughed up three consecutive mouthfuls of blood. Despite his seeming weakness, though, his eyes shone with a gleam of determination that left everyone in the audience completely shaken.

“He... won?!?!”

“A mid Core Formation cultivator fought someone in the late Core Formation stage, and actually won?!?!”

“Heavens! He just beat the statue of Gongsun Wan’er! Doesn’t that mean... that he qualifies to enter the violet trial? He’s going to become... the tenth superstar to be on the violet portion of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect rainbow?!?!”

Outside of the trials, everyone was devolving into a huge commotion. Nearly half of the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was shaken to the core, even more so than when Gongsun Wan’er had recently challenged the trials.

An uproar was sweeping through the sect, and especially through Sky Quarter Rainbow, where Bai Xiaochun came from. The hubbub there was far more intense than in other locations.

Back on that very rainbow, Song Que was standing outside of his immortal’s cave, his hands clenched tightly into fists. It was difficult to read his expression, but his heart was filled with bitterness. He simply could not bring himself to admit that he didn’t measure up to Bai Xiaochun, but the endless succession of evidence had pushed him to the brink of collapse.

Xu Baocai, Master God-Diviner, and Chen Manyao were all shaken deeply. Although all of them knew that Bai Xiaochun was no ordinary cultivator, never could they have imagined that he was this incredible.

Gongsun Wan’er was also on Sky Quarter Rainbow, sitting outside of her immortal’s cave on a boulder, looking up toward the

Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials. She had just watched the entire fight play out between her statue and Bai Xiaochun, and at the moment, a strange expression could be seen on her face. In fact, when her statue collapsed, she actually smiled.

“So, big bro is as awesome as ever!” She even clapped her hands softly, a mysterious light flickering in her eyes.

Outside of Sky Quarter Rainbow were Chen Yueshan and Heretic, both of whom were superstars and chosen from the top 3. They were completely shaken by the battle they had just witnessed. As for Chen Yueshan, her eyes shone with a mysterious light, whereas Heretic simply snorted coldly. Although he didn’t say anything, the arrogant look in his eyes couldn’t have been clearer.

Even Nascent Soul cultivators in the sect had been watching, and were moved by Bai Xiaochun’s actions. As of this moment, it was correct to say that within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect... there wasn’t a single person who didn’t know Bai Xiaochun!!

However, even as everyone devolved into exclamations and discussion, someone suddenly cried out.

“No, wait... look at Bai Xiaochun. He’s... he’s starting to practice cultivation!!”

In response, more people looked over and saw what was happening. “Frigid qi. Look at the frigid qi....”

Bai Xiaochun really was practicing cultivation, although it wasn’t intentional. After Gongsun Wan’er’s statue was destroyed, frigid qi began to spread out from it and fill the blue trial by fire. And since it had nowhere else to go, it began to stream toward Bai Xiaochun.

Whether Bai Xiaochun wanted it or not, the frigid qi began to pour into his body, sweeping through his qi passageways and heading toward... his Heaven-Dao Gold Core!

It was strong frigid qi, and in the blink of an eye, it transformed into a vortex with Bai Xiaochun at the center!

As it rushed into his Gold Core, it filled it to thirty percent capacity, then forty percent, fifty percent, sixty percent....

As more frigid qi rushed into him, he trembled at the sensation of his cultivation base rising. Before, he had been at the peak of mid Core Formation, but as of this moment, he was breaking through into late Core Formation!

It took only a short moment for the overall frigid qi in his Gold Core to reach sixty percent, and yet, it hadn't stopped!!

His Gold Core was made from nine spiritual seas, sixty percent of which were now a world of intense coldness. And then... Bai Xiaochun shivered, threw his head back and let loose a long cry as his frigid qi reached... seventy percent!!

The Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation involved gathering frigid qi into the Gold Core, which meant that thirty percent was the peak of the early stage, and sixty percent was the peak of the mid stage.

Earlier, his overall level of frigid qi had reached roughly sixty percent, but now... having reached seventy percent, intense rumbling sounds exploded within him as his cultivation base released shocking power.

This was... the late Gold Core stage!!

And things weren't over yet! More frigid qi poured into him, pushing his Gold Core frigid qi past seventy percent to eighty percent!

When the final bit of frigid qi was sucked in, his Gold Core frigid qi capacity had reached eighty-five percent, and his cultivation base was still climbing. As of now, he was very close to reaching one hundred percent capacity and being at... the great circle of the Gold Core stage!!

As his cultivation base rose and his energy surged, the blue trial by fire shook violently, and on the outside, the star that

represented Bai Xiaochun shone with blinding light!

Everyone outside was completely shaken!

“This Bai Xiaochun, he... he actually just had a breakthrough!!”

“Late Core Formation! He just reached late Core Formation!!”

“He could fight late Core Formation when he was only in mid Core Formation. Now that he’s in the late stage, doesn’t that mean he could fight someone in the great circle!?!?”

“What good fortune.... It’s all because he cultivates a technique that uses frigid qi. By absorbing the excess frigid qi from Gongsun Wan’er’s statue, he was able to break through!”

Chapter 439: I Only Have A Wish

Although it might not have seemed possible, the commotion outside grew even more chaotic. This second time in which Bai Xiaochun challenged the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials had involved him pulling off one miracle after another!!

First was the incredible speed with which he made it through the early trials, then was his victory over a late Core Formation expert while he himself was only in the mid stage, and finally was his cultivation base breakthrough!

Because of all those things, everyone outside was left reeling. After all, of the group that made up the nine cultivators who were already in the violet portion of the rainbow, eight were in the great circle, with Gongsun Wan'er being the only one in late Core Formation. And yet now, someone else had joined, someone who had entered the group in the mid stage and then immediately risen to the late stage!

As everyone discussed the matter, Bai Xiaochun shivered, and the frigid qi inside of him settled down, placing him firmly in late Core Formation. However, there was no time for him to probe his cultivation base; instead, he shot toward the light of teleportation. Even as he did, numerous motes of light in the area swirled together to form another statue.

It was a statue of Bai Xiaochun!

When he stopped for a moment to look back at it, he saw that it resembled him perfectly, and its aura was very similar to his. However, the statue's expression was cold and blank as it stood there, completely unmoving.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. He knew that from now on, anyone who tried to get into the violet portion of the rainbow would have to fight his statue as the last part of their trial!

After a moment, he looked away, headed into the teleportation light, and then vanished!

Of course, the discussion among the audience didn't die down at all. The events which had unfolded on this day were things rarely ever seen, especially considering that there were now ten extremely famous cultivators in the sect. It was a momentous, joyous occasion.

Because Bai Xiaochun had made his breakthrough after the battle, that meant that anyone who tried to challenge that trial in the future would fight the mid Core Formation version of him, not the late stage Bai Xiaochun from after the victory.

That statue represented a certain status in the sect. As long as it remained undefeated, no one would be able to enter the violet trial, and as of this moment, more people were staring at the statue than there had been people watching Bai Xiaochun himself.

As for Bai Xiaochun, when he stepped into the teleportation light, he vanished, disappearing from the blue trial by fire and reappearing within the violet trial!

Meanwhile, on the violet portion of the rainbow, a tenth star had appeared, and all the eyes that had been focusing on the statue shifted over to look at it.

Although no one could see what was happening with Bai Xiaochun now, everyone was wondering.

The mere fact that no one knew what was going on in the violet trial made the entire scenario more mysterious. That added level of mystery made everyone want more than ever to know what would happen next. In a short few months, two people had reached the violet portion of the rainbow, and the mere thought of what happened inside that violet trial was a motivating force for many other cultivators.

As such thoughts filled the minds of all present, Bai Xiaochun

appeared within the very violet trial that no one else could see, to find himself in a dimension that was different from all of the other trials by fire.

Stretching out in front of him was a river, upon whose bank he stood.

A blank look could be seen in his eyes, as though he had forgotten something. Furthermore, as he looked around, he got the sensation that nothing around him was real.

“What did I forget?” he thought in surprise, sitting down on the riverbank to think. However, even after some time passed, the only thing he could remember was his name. All of his other memories seemed to have disappeared.

The confusion in his eyes grew deeper.

His original plan upon entering the light of teleportation had been to abandon the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trial as soon as he entered the next stage. After all, by that point, his goal would have been met, and he could request the power of a deva to save Big Fatty Zhang.

Time was of the essence.

However, as soon as he entered the mysterious violet trial by fire, he couldn't remember any of that.

“No,” he murmured, “I remember that there was something important I needed to do.” Frowning, he tried harder to think back to whatever it was that he'd forgotten, and it was in that moment that he suddenly heard someone singing.

The voice rose and fell, making the lyrics of the song impossible to make out. However, the person singing seemed old, ancient even. A moment later, a lonely boat appeared on the river.

An old man sat in the boat, wearing a wide bamboo hat, and pushing the boat along with a long bamboo pole. Upon nearing the bank, he looked up, revealing a face wrinkled with age. Smiling, he

said, "Is your heart unsettled?"

Bai Xiaochun looked up at the old man and the boat. Feeling confused, he replied, "I feel like I've forgotten something."

"Everyone forgets things sometimes," the old man said with a smile. "Why don't you come aboard and listen to my ballad? Perhaps that will help you remember whatever it is you've forgotten."

Bai Xiaochun sat there quietly for a moment, then rose to his feet and hopped into the boat. With that, the old man pushed on the bamboo pole, and the boat once again began to move down the river.

As Bai Xiaochun sat there in the lonely boat, the old man began to sing. Strangely, no matter how closely Bai Xiaochun paid attention, he was unable to make out any of the words the old man sang.

After a moment, he couldn't hold back from asking, "What are you singing?"

"A folk song," the old man replied.

Bai Xiaochun listened for a bit longer, then asked, "Does it have a name?"

"It doesn't." Smiling, the old man continued, "It's a ballad, the end of which no one will ever hear. Nine other people came before you, and none of them listened to the entire song. The first person listened to it for the longest, but gave up eventually." With that, he continued singing.

Bai Xiaochun sat there silently, both listening and also trying to recall what it was that he had forgotten. The water in the river was by no means still; waves rolled back and forth, and after a bit of time, a rather large one hit the side of the boat. As Bai Xiaochun swayed back and forth with the rocking of the boat, his mind stirred, and suddenly, he remembered something.

He was in a room with his father, who was gripping his hand tightly as he said, “Xiaochun, you have to keep on living....”

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun as that memory sparked a fire which raged through his mind, causing his memories to flood back into him with mountain-toppling, sea-draining power.

“I have to save Eldest Brother!!” he thought, shivering as he remembered everything from before. He suddenly stood up, whereupon the boat vanished, along with the river. The entire room around him was now completely empty.

In front of him was the old man, though, who turned and looked at Bai Xiaochun, eyes sparkling with bizarre, mysterious light.

“Do you see clearly now?” the old man asked.

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said. “Oh. I don’t want to participate in this trial by fire. I need to save someone!!” Now that he had regained his memories, this trial seemed even stranger than before.

The old man looked at him for a long moment, and then repeated, “Do you see clearly now?”

Bai Xiaochun was starting to get a bit angry. “I–”

However, he only got one word out of his mouth before the old man shook his head and interrupted with a sigh. “Fine, I know what you’re thinking. Get into the violet trial, and you can ask for a boon from the sect. As long as it’s not too excessive, your wish will be granted. For example, your hostage status can be removed.”

“I want the power of a deva!” Bai Xiaochun said immediately.

The old man nodded. “After you leave, someone will deliver it to you.”

With that, he waved his hand, causing a vortex to spring up in the void, which began to tug Bai Xiaochun toward it.

Just before going through the exit, Bai Xiaochun stopped and looked back at the old man, who was walking away from him into

the void.

“Just now,” Bai Xiaochun said, “you asked if I could see something clearly. What were you talking about?”

The old man didn’t look back. Voice cool, he replied, “Your Dao!”

Bai Xiaochun was confused. The old man continued to walk away, and as Bai Xiaochun sank into the exit, he called out, “I’m not sure what my Dao is, but I do have a wish, and that’s to live forever!”

The old man stopped walking, looked back, and smiled. “That’s your Dao!”

Rumbling sounds echoed out, and Bai Xiaochun vanished, to appear moments later outside of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials!

The first thing that met him was the sound of numerous discussions, shortly after which, his vision grew clear. Almost immediately, he caught sight of countless cultivators looking at him with envy and respect.

At the same time, a solemn voice spoke out from the sect leader’s portion of Myriad Star Rainbow.

“Hostage Bai Xiaochun of the River-Defying Sect, your request has been granted. You will be bestowed with the power of a deva!”

A bright beam of light shot down from the sky to appear in front of Bai Xiaochun in the shape of a crystalline leaf that pulsed with incredible power!

Everyone in the area felt incredible pressure weighing down onto them, making it hard to even breathe, almost as if their cultivation bases were being suppressed. Shockingly, that leaf contained wood-type deva power!

Furthermore, it was a full portion of power, not just a tiny scrap!

Chapter 440: The Extraordinary River-Defying Sect

When Bai Xiaochun appeared outside of the trials, and the sect leader's voice echoed out, everyone who had been watching his performance was left completely shaken.

It only took moments for countless fervent gazes to be turned in Bai Xiaochun's direction. Normally speaking, he would have given everyone an opportunity to approach and offer words of praise. But he was in no mood for that now.

As soon as he had that power of a deva, he shot into the sky, transforming into a beam of light that sped directly toward the teleportation portal.

He had no idea how much time had passed, and anxiously wished to get back to the Hall of Devil Slayers on Sky Quarter Rainbow to save Big Fatty Zhang!

As he left, numerous discussions broke out amongst the audience. Bai Xiaochun was now listed among the absolute most high-level disciples within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

He was in the top 10!!

Although no one was sure of what he had experienced within the violet trial, they did know that the violet portion of the rainbow now had a tenth star!

It was easy to imagine how, in the days to come, Bai Xiaochun's name would continue to rise to unprecedented heights within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

However, Bai Xiaochun was not in the mood to revel in the glory of his achievement. He pushed forward with all the speed he could muster until he was at the teleportation portal, where he vanished, to reappear moments later on Sky Quarter Rainbow.

As soon as he stepped off of the teleportation portal there, he saw numerous Sky Quarter Rainbow cultivators gathered, looking at him with expressions of awe as they called out greetings.

“Greetings, Elder Brother Bai!”

Bai Xiaochun was too nervous about Big Fatty Zhang to do more than simply nod in response, and then hurry on his way. Considering he was now in late Core Formation, he could move faster than ever as he shot off in a beam of light.

Literally nothing could have blocked his path, although no one attempted to do so, not even when he passed directly through some of the other Ten Halls.

Because he was in the top 10 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, he had a special place in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, as well as special privileges. Thus, he arrived at the Hall of Devil Slayers in less time than it takes an incense stick to burn.

Instantly, numerous cultivators emerged to offer formal greetings, their faces filled with respect. Back before he had challenged the trials, everyone in the Hall of Devil Slayers had only pretended to respect him, and secretly scorned him for relying on a powerful backer to become important.

Some of them had changed their tune a bit after he got into the top 400. But now that his name was on the violet portion of the rainbow, everything had changed.

“Greetings, Elder Brother Bai!”

“Elder Brother Bai....”

More and more people appeared, and more voices rang out. There were some people Bai Xiaochun recognized, including Master Cloud-Dao, who was waiting outside the main temple. As soon as Master Cloud-Dao caught sight of him, he clasped hands and bowed in deep and exaggerated fashion.

“Congratulations, Elder Brother Bai!”

Master God-Diviner, Xu Baocai, and Chen Manyao were also waiting outside of the main temple, and when they caught sight of Bai Xiaochun, excited expressions appeared on their faces.

Bai Xiaochun nodded to everyone, then walked into the temple looking very serious. The first thing he saw was the gaunt, skeletal form of Big Fatty Zhang, sitting there cross-legged in the middle of the temple, a pained expression on his face. Clearly, his life force was so faint that it was almost nonexistent, and a strong aura of death surrounded him. Had Feng Youde not been there the entire time bolstering him with his Nascent Soul cultivation base, Big Fatty Zhang would have long since slipped into death.

“Daoist Master, I’ve brought the power of a deva!” Looking trepidatiously at Big Fatty Zhang, Bai Xiaochun quickly pulled out the wood-type leaf he had just received.

Feng Youde looked up and made a grasping motion, causing the leaf to fly over and come to a rest above Big Fatty Zhang’s head.

Expression somber, Feng Youde performed an incantation gesture and pointed out at the leaf, which began to tremble and emit a greenish glow. At the same time, green strands of energy emerged from the leaf and began to bore into Big Fatty Zhang.

Big Fatty Zhang shivered, and the look of pain on his face faded away. Almost immediately, a faint, ruddy glow could be seen on his cheeks, and the mist which surrounded him began to swirl back inside of him. Instead of spreading out in all directions like it had been, it was taking form inside his dantian region.

Seeing that, Bai Xiaochun’s nervousness immediately began to fade. Finally, Feng Youde took a deep breath and rose to his feet.

“With the help of the power of a deva, your Eldest Brother’s Core Formation should proceed smoothly from here on out. However, he did drain a lot of his life force. The process should take a full half year before it’s complete.” He sighed. “Fine... you can leave him here for me to watch over.”

“Many thanks, Daoist Master!” Bai Xiaochun said excitedly, clasping hands and bowing deeply. Then he looked over one more time to confirm that Big Fatty Zhang was safe, which was when he realized how exhausted he was.

The fight with the statue of Gongsun Wan'er had been a huge draw on both his cultivation base and his energy in general. Coupled with all the anxiety he had felt regarding Big Fatty Zhang, everything returned to hit him at once. Now that he was sure Big Fatty Zhang was safe, he left the temple and returned, not to his immortal's cave, but rather, one of the empty residences in the Hall of Devil Slayers, where he sat down to do some breathing exercises and recuperate.

He rested for three days straight.

During that time, the commotion which had begun three days before continue to sweep through the sect, and Bai Xiaochun's name grew more famous than ever. Soon, the details of his background became more commonly known. As such, the cultivators in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect... came to know of the River-Defying Sect.

After all... two of the top 10 Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars... were from the River-Defying Sect!

“This River-Defying Sect... is extraordinary!”

“It's hard to even wrap your mind around the fact that two River-Defying Sect hostages are in the top 10!”

“I heard that when Bai Xiaochun came from the River-Defying Sect, he brought some Dao protectors with him.... I bet those Dao protectors are incredible too!” Slowly but surely, the identities of Bai Xiaochun's Dao protectors came to be known.

Song Que. Big Fatty Zhang. Xu Baocai. Master God-Diviner. Chen Manyao. Those five names gradually became the subject of much discussion. Xu Baocai didn't think much of the matter, and

actually basked in the glory, whereas Song Que had a hard time accepting it.

In fact, on the fourth day, Song Que left his immortal's cave and headed toward the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials to prove that, although he might not be Bai Xiaochun's equal, he was still not far behind.

Because he was one of Bai Xiaochun's Dao protectors, a lot of people paid attention to his run, and when he ended up being ranked within the 600s, it caused quite a stir.

After Song Que was Chen Manyao, who placed around the same as Song Que, neither very high nor very low.

Master God-Diviner didn't really want to go, but ended up being convinced, and after going all-out, reaching a rank in the 900's.

Xu Baocai hesitated about whether or not to go, and in the end, didn't dare to try. As far as he was concerned, if he couldn't get into the top 1,000, then it would be too embarrassing to try.

Xu Baocai didn't challenge the trials, but Song Que, Chen Manyao, and Master God-Diviner all did, and it caused the name of the River-Defying Sect to rise to even greater heights. Eventually, the peak lord of Sky Quarter Rainbow personally sent down instructions to notify the River-Defying Sect of what had occurred, and to give them a bit of a reward.

The reward itself didn't count for much, but the peak lord's attitude did. Furthermore, the performance of Bai Xiaochun and his Dao protectors ensured that the other three great sects in the Middle Reaches were even more hesitant than before to cause any problems for the River-Defying Sect.

That was especially true because of how both Bai Xiaochun and Gongsun Wan'er had reached the top 10. The other three sects were shocked, and immediately did their best to contact the River-Defying Sect and improve relations.

In response to all of this, the patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect were very excited.

Patriarch Frigidsect threw his head back and laughed uproariously. “Ah, Xiaochun. Wherever the kid goes, he becomes a star. Nothing can keep him down!”

The other disciples in the sect were overjoyed, especially Hou Xiaomei and Song Junwan, as well as Bai Xiaochun’s other friends.

A month went by in which Bai Xiaochun’s name continue to rise in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, to the point where literally everyone had heard of him, even the devas.

As for Big Fatty Zhang, he never awoke, but was in stable condition. He was no longer gaunt and skeletal, and the mist which surrounded him was slowly merging into his body. He had passed the moment of deadly crisis, and within a few months, would have formed his Will Core and stepped into Core Formation!

Chapter 441: Soul Hunting Expedition

Everything was turning up, and Bai Xiaochun's mood was improving. Considering that, he now felt up to public appearances, and not just on Sky Quarter Rainbow. He went to the other rainbow districts as well, and the adulation he received left him feeling quite pleased. From what he could tell, he was almost at the ultimate peak of life.

“Ai. With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun reduced the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars to ashes. What a headache. Imposter Nightcrypt, why do think I'm so outstanding?” Before leaving his immortal's cave, he would always pull out his copper mirror to examine himself, and when he was in a good mood, he would always ask this same question of imposter Nightcrypt.

As for imposter Nightcrypt, every time he heard that question, he felt as if he were covered with goosebumps. And yet, he would still plaster on a smile and rack his brains to come up with some new words of flattery to please Bai Xiaochun.

The little turtle always seemed to be busy, and never came out even once to say anything sarcastic. As such, Bai Xiaochun felt more wonderful than ever at being here in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Unfortunately, good things never last forever. Another half a month went by, and a Dharmic decree came down from the demigod rainbow!

It happened one morning when Bai Xiaochun emerged from his immortal's cave in very high spirits. He looked at the distant sea, felt the breeze caressing his face, and took a deep, contented breath. Patting his bag of holding, he produced his copper mirror.

Clearing his throat, he said, “Hey Nightsies, come, come, explain to me why Lord Bai gets praised wherever he goes.”

Of course, he was just getting ready to go strolling about to receive some praise and adulation.

Poor Imposter Nightcrypt was on the verge of crying. Over the course of the last half month, he had scraped the bottom of the barrel in his attempts to come up with new material, and his existence was now a torment that made life almost unbearable.

“Master, please spare me....” he groveled piteously.

Bai Xiaochun was not very pleased by his reaction. Glaring, he was just about to respond when, all of a sudden, thunderous rumbling filled the air, causing everything to shake. Colors flashed in the sky, and a screaming wind kicked up. All of the rainbows were shaking, including the deva rainbow and Myriad Star Rainbow.

Everyone from the devas down to the Qi Condensation disciples were completely shaken, and no matter what they were doing at the moment, looked up with flickering expressions.

Startled, Bai Xiaochun almost dropped his copper mirror as he looked up into the sky, astonishment and confusion playing out on his face.

“What’s going on!?”

A moment later, a profoundly dignified and ancient voice echoed out from the demigod rainbow to fill the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

“A Heavenspan imperial decree has been issued, and a soul-hunting expedition will begin. In one month, the Starry Sky Battleship will set sail for the Wildlands!”

Every single word spoken by that ancient voice almost seemed like natural law, causing all creation to fill with rumbling sounds, and all hearts to be shaken. As for Bai Xiaochun, he wasn’t quite sure exactly what the voice was talking about.

After all, he had only just entered the top 10 of the Starry Sky Dao

Polarity Superstars, and didn't have a very complete understanding of how things worked for that group. However, as for everyone else who was in the top 100, they couldn't hold back their excitement upon hearing the announcement.

“The soul-hunting expedition is finally going to happen!!”

“After this trial by fire, I'll definitely be able to step into the Nascent Soul stage!!”

“Hahaha! I've been waiting for this day for a long time now!”

On Starry Quarter Rainbow, atop a mountain peak covered with endless flames, was 3rd place holder Chen Yueshan, who rose to her feet, her long hair swirling around her as her eyes burned with passion.

“The soul hunt....”

On Polarity Quarter Rainbow, 2nd place holder Heretic, one of the top superstars in the sect, was fighting a host of vengeful souls at the bottom of a deep cistern. Suddenly, a tremor passed through him, and his eyes began to shine with excitement.

“It's finally happening, huh...? Alright, Zhao Tianjiao, now we can finally see which of us will get a deva soul, and then step into the Nascent Soul stage!! It's definitely going to be me!”

As waves of astonishment swept through the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, somewhere outside of the sect, in a seemingly endless mountain range, a young man walked along beneath the trees. He was tall and slender, with a very cold expression, and a greatsword strapped to his back. The reek of blood surrounded him as he walked, as if he had slaughtered countless enemies on his journey.

Shockingly, he held a head in his hand. It was the head of an old man, his expression twisted viciously, and emanating an aura that indicated his cultivation level when he had been alive: the Nascent Soul stage!!

As the young man strode through the trees, he suddenly stopped in place and produced a jade slip from his bag of holding. Upon looking at the information in the slip, his eyes shone with a gaze so bright and corrosive that the surrounding plants and vegetation began to wither and die.

“So, the soul-hunting expedition that I’ve been waiting for is finally happening!!” The young man’s gaze intensified, and the destructive effect on the plants and vegetation spread. In the blink of an eye, everything in an entire 3,000-meter area withered away into death!

This young man was none other than the 1st place holder among the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, Zhao Tianjiao!

After the news about the soul-hunting expedition came down from the demigod rainbow, the sect leader quickly sent out a number of orders, as did the peak lords from the four rainbow districts.

All sorts of information began to spread through the sect, until everyone was bubbling with gossip.

After hearing some of the talk, Bai Xiaochun still wasn’t completely sure of all the details, and quickly summoned Xu Baocai.

As soon as he stepped into Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave, he said, “Junior Patriarch, this is something big. Very big!!”

“Alright,” Bai Xiaochun said nervously, “hurry up and explain exactly what this soul-hunting expedition is!”

Sounding very excited, Xu Baocai said, “Junior Patriarch, I already got all the information. The soul-hunting expedition is basically good fortune for all Core Formation cultivators preparing to step into the Nascent Soul stage!”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, looking surprised. “Good fortune?”

Based on some of the information he’d heard, the soul-hunting

expedition, although not anything like a death sentence, was definitely very dangerous.

“That’s right!” Xu Baocai continued. “I just heard about it myself. If you want to break through from Core Formation into the Nascent Soul stage, you have to do it by one of three ways. First is by using a Nascent Soul Pill, which is the mortal-tier method. The second method is by using five elements deva beast souls, which is the earth-tier method. Last is the most legendary of all, the heaven-tier method, in which you use five elements deva souls. However, that final method is virtually impossible!”

“If you stay inside the sect, even reaching the earth-tier Nascent Soul stage is quite difficult. After all, deva beast souls are rare just like deva souls.

“However, things are different in the Wildlands. Supposedly, there is a river in the Wildlands which is similar to the Heavenspan River. The difference is that it is a river that the living cannot see. It’s an underworld river, a path that all the souls from the entire world travel after death!

“Because of that, souls are a lot more common in the Wildlands. In fact, they’re everywhere. Within that literally uncountable number of souls, it’s possible to find, not only deva beast souls, but also deva souls!!

“And that’s why the place is the ultimate place of good fortune for Core Formation cultivators!!” From the level of Xu Baocai’s excitement as he spoke, it was evident that he would leap at the chance to be qualified to go the Wildlands.

“The Wildlands....” Bai Xiaochun said. The truth was that Bai Xiaochun knew a bit more about the Wildlands than Xu Baocai did, and the first thing that popped into this mind was that something seemed strange about this trial by fire. It was definitely not as simple as it sounded.

After all, there weren’t just souls in the Wildlands, there were

also cultivators!!

“This soul-hunting expedition is going to happen in the Wildlands. That ancient battleship is going to sail across the Heavenspan Sea toward another path which leads to the Wildlands!” Xu Baocai pointed to the huge, mysterious battleship at the top of the waterfall.

Bai Xiaochun looked up at the ship, and was shaken as he recalled something Chen Manyao had said back when she had been trying to convince him to let her join his group of Dao protectors. She had mentioned this very ship, and Bai Xiaochun now realized that she must have known about this soul-hunting expedition all along!

“The only people who qualify to go to the Wildlands on this ten-year-long trial by fire are famous people among the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. Congratulations, Junior Patriarch. It’s hard to say for sure, but when you come back, you’ll probably be a Nascent Soul cultivator!

“The ultimate goal of the trial by fire is to acquire a deva soul. Anyone who does can bring it back to the sect and exchange it for a complete set of five elements deva beast souls!!

“Even if you can’t get a deva soul, and only get a single deva beast soul, you can still bring it back to the sect and trade it for a precious Nascent Soul Pill!!”

Chapter 442: Du Lingfei Appears In Person!

“I even heard that a lot of the top 100 Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars could have reached the Nascent Soul stage years ago, but have been suppressing themselves just so that they could join this soul-hunting expedition!” Beaming with delight, Xu Baocai continued to explain everything he’d learned.

The more Bai Xiaochun heard, the grimmer his expression got. In the end, he felt deeply conflicted about the whole trial by fire.

Finally, he made a decision. “I definitely can’t go,” he thought. “Absolutely not!!”

Suddenly, Xu Baocai’s face lit up as if he had just remembered something. Looking shocked and incredulous, he said, “Oh right, there’s something else you definitely don’t know about, Junior Patriarch, something huge. Heavens! Even I had never heard a whisper about this. It was only after word of the trial by fire began to spread that I caught wind of it.

“Junior Patriarch, did you know that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is a lot bigger than you ever imagined? That’s right. What you see around us here is not the entirety of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. There are other parts of the sect that are located within the Great Wall!!” Even Xu Baocai was still shaking from this shocking news, despite having heard it some time ago.

“The Great Wall?” Bai Xiaochun said, a look of shock appearing on his face.

“The four sections of the Great Wall all connect eventually, creating a huge circle that protects the Heavenspan Sea, and all the sects too!

“Everything outside the Great Wall is the true Wildlands!! According to what I heard, everyone who takes part in the soul-hunting expedition has to actually go outside of the Great Wall, on

more than one occasion....” As he talked, and brought together all of the various bits of information he had learned, Xu Baocai’s expression slowly changed as he realized that, clearly, this Great Wall was separating two opposing forces!

His voice gradually faded away, and his pupils constricted.

“You get it now, don’t you?” Bai Xiaochun said, scowling a bit as he looked at Xu Baocai.

“It can’t be like that, can it?” Xu Baocai said quietly. “Maybe the area outside the Great Wall is just really dangerous. That’s why they built it, to keep out the danger? Or maybe to keep all the souls from getting inside?” Xu Baocai was feeling more and more like there was something mysterious going on, and he shivered, almost like an instinctual reaction to piecing together some puzzle.

Not daring to think about the subject too deeply, Xu Baocai left in somewhat of a daze. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was scowling on the verge of tears. Based on the sensation of danger he was feeling, he knew that he had to think of a way to make sure he didn’t go on the soul-hunting expedition. And yet, before he could, the orders of the sect leader and the peak lords spread out to all of the disciples.

“All Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars in the top 1,000 are required to join the soul-hunting expedition. It will last for ten years, during which time you must go outside of the Great Wall at least three times! After the ten years are up, you may return to the sect headquarters!”

Almost immediately, Bai Xiaochun was filled with a sense of foreboding.

“I’m finished,” he moaned. “Kaput....” After all, this was not the River-Defying Sect, where he had so much sway with the patriarchs. He had only just reached the violet portion of the rainbow, and made a name for himself. As far as he could tell, he had no options available.

“This mission is going to be way too dangerous! The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s so-called Great Wall is obviously there to keep out, not just the souls, but the traitors....” After much thought, he decided to go to Chen Manyao’s immortal’s cave to see if he could get some answers.

Chen Manyao didn’t seem surprised at all to see him. After inviting him inside, they sat down, and an enigmatic smile appeared on her face.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and said, “So, um, Manyao, do you think I’ve treated you well here in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect? You still haven’t fulfilled that one promise from early on.”

Chen Manyao covered her mouth and chuckled lightly. She was beautiful to begin with, but whenever she laughed or smiled, she seemed even more attractive.

“Don’t worry, Junior Patriarch. Even in the Wildlands outside of the Great Wall, you’ll be safe as long as you’re careful. Furthermore, this trip will definitely be an opportunity for good fortune. You never know. You might even end up with a deva soul. Although, if you’re really worried, you could always join our side.”

Bai Xiaochun sighed. Avoiding the topic she had brought up, he said. “Ah come on, how many deva souls can there be in the world? After all the years that have passed, surely any that did exist have already been found.”

“There are some things you probably don’t understand completely, Junior Patriarch. The Wildlands are special. The Underworld River there contains a huge amount of souls. Throughout all the countless years that have passed since the Heavenspan Realm came to exist, all the souls which have died end up in that river, and build up in the Wildlands. Even if there were fewer deva souls than there are, there would still be some!”

“They build up?” he murmured, a look of shock appearing on his face.

“I don’t know the details, and in fact, I don’t even know why it happens that way. But what I do know is that the Wildlands has been building up souls for years and years.” Chen Manyao seemed very earnest in her words.

“There isn’t any spiritual energy in the Wildlands,” Bai Xiaochun pointed out, “so how do the people there practice cultivation?”

“There is no spiritual energy,” Chen Manyao said softly. “But there are plenty of souls. Hunt them, absorb them, and that is how you can practice cultivation!”

After a long moment passed, Chen Manyao once again brought up the subject of Bai Xiaochun joining the Wildlanders. This time, Bai Xiaochun didn’t refuse outright. He thought about it for a bit, then turned and left.

As he walked along the paths of Sky Quarter Rainbow, he heaved sighs left and right. His intuition was telling him that this soul-hunting expedition was going to be very dangerous. And yet, there was nothing he could do to get out of it. Therefore, he had no choice but to accept his fate. Face grim, he flew back to his immortal’s cave.

Along the way, quite a few cultivators noticed him and called out respectful greetings. However, he was no longer in the mood to revel in their attention. Evening was falling, and the light of the setting sun reflecting off of the golden waters of the Heavenspan Sea made for quite a beautiful scene. Bai Xiaochun looked out at it, then sighed, thinking about how he already had a deva soul. If he really ran out of options, he could always find a safe place inside the Great Wall to hide for ten years, then come back to the sect, trade it for a set of deva beast souls, and then step into the Nascent Soul stage.

Feeling sorry for himself, and still wrestling with what decision to make, he walked up to his immortal’s cave and prepared to enter. However, just before stepping inside, he stopped and looked

up, and his eyes flashed.

Unexpectedly, someone was waiting for him inside of his immortal's cave!

He immediately drew upon the power of his cultivation base, waving his finger to cause the front door to swing open, revealing a young woman, standing there with her back to him!

As soon as he saw her back, a tremor ran through him, and he began to breathe heavily.

“You....”

As soon as the words escaped his lips, the young woman slowly turned, revealing a face that shocked Bai Xiaochun down to the core!

“Xiaochun....” she said softly, her eyes glistening.

“Du Lingfei!” he said. He had often thought about what it would be like to see Du Lingfei again. As of this moment, he realized that it was not as shocking of an event as he had imagined. Although it had come like bolt out of the blue, deep in his heart, he had long since prepared for their reunion.

His eyes flickered with complicated emotions as a quiet moment passed. All of a sudden, he thought about how the Sky Quarter peak lord had treated him, and how Feng Youde had taken him under his wing. During the entire time he had been in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, it had always seemed like someone was out there, secretly watching out for him. Although he had had his various speculations, now that he saw Du Lingfei standing there, everything made complete sense.

Her expression complex and filled with melancholy, she said, “Xiaochun, I’m sorry for–”

“Was that you in the Blood Stream Sect!?” he interrupted, speaking his words slowly and with force.

“Yes!” she replied without the slightest hesitation.

Staring at her, he continued with more questions. “Were you an agent of some sort? Why? What were you doing in the Spirit Stream Sect and the Blood Stream Sect? And what are you doing here?”

Chapter 443: Boarding

“I had no choice in the matter,” she said bitterly, shaking her head.

The pain visible in her smile softened Bai Xiaochun’s heart a bit. Lowering his voice, he said, “Who exactly are you? Where are you from?”

After a long moment of silence, she took a deep breath and said, “I’m from the Heavenspan Sea, and that’s all I can say. Don’t ask any more about it....”

Shaken, Bai Xiaochun remained silent.

Outside, the sun was setting, and the sky was growing dark. It was quiet in the immortal’s cave, with the only sound being their breathing.

Eventually, the immortal’s cave grew dark, and finally, Bai Xiaochun decided to ask another question, a question which had been lurking in his heart for a long time, a question which he very much wanted to know the answer to.

“Back in the Luochen Mountains, the tears you shed, were they real, or just for show...?”

She didn’t directly answer his question. Instead, she extended her right hand, within which appeared a violet tongue of flame. As it burned, it released a shocking energy, something that surpassed the energy of the leaf Bai Xiaochun had received that contained the power of a deva. This made it seem like a deva was actually standing right there with them. Furthermore, within the burning violet flames was... a soul!!

Looking up at him, she spoke in a voice that was almost a murmur. “Do you think this deva soul is real, or just for show?”

To see Du Lingfei holding a deva soul shocked Bai Xiaochun to the core. He also had a deva soul, the wood-type soul that Patriarch

Frigidsect had given him. He had been shocked when he was told how valuable deva souls were, but back then, their true value had been some abstract to him.

Now, on the verge of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect sending numerous disciples on a soul-hunting expedition, he was more acutely aware than ever of how valuable deva souls were.

Anyone who wanted to achieve a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul needed five deva souls, each one a different type. When it came to deva beast souls... any single deva soul could be traded for a set of five of them!

From that alone, it was easy to calculate how astronomically valuable any deva soul was!

Before Bai Xiaochun could even respond to her words, Du Lingfei sent the fire-type soul floating over to Bai Xiaochun. As it did, her body began to slowly fade away.

The entire time, her gaze was soft as she looked at Bai Xiaochun, and seemed to be filled with regret and sentiment.

“The Wildlands is a dangerous place. You... should make sure not to do anything risky. When you get back, trade that deva soul for a set of deva beast souls.... At that time, I’ll explain everything!” With that, she disappeared.

Bai Xiaochun simply stood there the entire time, declining to speak. After she faded away, he closed his eyes for a moment, then opened them and reached out to take the fire-type deva soul. Then he sat down cross-legged to think, although he wasn’t sure about what.

Time passed. Half a month flew by, and the day of the trial by fire grew closer. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun had no choice but to rouse himself and start preparing. He got very busy, both concocting pills, performing spirit enhancements, and doing everything else he could to get himself in peak condition.

On the day before the trial by fire was to begin, he emerged from his immortal's cave and went to the Hall of Devil Slayers to say goodbye to Big Fatty Zhang. Big Fatty Zhang had not yet awoken, but had recovered significantly. His aura was stable, and his cultivation base was growing stronger. Within two or three months, he would have successfully reached Core Formation.

He sat down in front of Big Fatty Zhang, feeling more than ever like he couldn't bear to leave. "Eldest Brother... the next time we see each other will be in ten years. I really wish I didn't have to leave."

He spoke many more words from his heart, until the sun began to set. Worried that he might be disturbing Big Fatty Zhang's Core Formation, he left the temple and went to see Feng Youde. Clasp hands deeply, he offered sincere thanks for the help Feng Youde had given him.

"Maintain a calm heart, that's the best thing you can do," Feng Youde said. "If you want to repay me, then come back as a Nascent Soul cultivator. As far as your Eldest Brother is concerned, I guarantee to watch over him."

Clasp hands and bowing again, Bai Xiaochun again expressed his gratitude. Of course, Xu Baocai would not be going along, so he went to visit and leave some parting instructions. Finally, he gritted his teeth and went back to his immortal's cave, where he meditated through the night.

Nothing happened during the night, and the sun rose into a cloudless sky. The day had come in which the trial by fire was to begin.

The thunderous sound of booming drums filled the entire sect, prompting all of the cultivators to emerge excited and filled with anticipation.

Bai Xiaochun had packed his bags, and looked very sad as he walked out the door of his immortal's cave and stood there

trembling.

Almost in the same instant, a huge rumbling sound rippled out from the direction of the sea down below. It almost sounded like the roaring of a giant, and it caused huge waves to roll across the surface of the sea as the enormous, ancient battleship thrummed with power.

As the ship powered up, the mysterious, ghost-like entities inside of it began to howl and scream, and eventually fled in terror. Apparently, the will of the battleship itself was awakening, causing its energy to rise to the point where even the rainbows that made up the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect were shaking.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath as he stared at the enormous battleship. It was fully 300,000 meters long, pitch black, and in very bad condition. It seemed ancient beyond belief, and there was something ferocious about it that made it seem like the type of ship no one would dare to even approach. The corpse of some enormous, rotting beast had been lashed to its prow, something so disfigured it was impossible to determine what it was. However, it was clearly humanoid, and had once been 30,000 meters tall.

The surface of the battleship was covered with countless spikes, all of which glowed with black light. It was easy to imagine powerful magical techniques being unleashed by means of those spikes, and how they would surely cause heaven and earth to tremble!

The ship had five decks, some parts of which were apparently locked down with magical seals.

Even as Bai Xiaochun was studying the battleship, it began to move, releasing explosive power that caused huge waves to roll out across the surface of the golden Heavenspan Sea.

Even as the battleship stirred into motion, an old man flew off of the deva rainbow. He was ancient, with flowing white hair that made him look like a transcendent being. In addition, he had a

third eye on his forehead, giving him a very intimidating appearance.

“I am Chen Hetian, and I will lead you on the journey to the sect outpost, where the soul-hunting expedition will be held. The journey across the sea will be a long one, more than half a year. All of you... board the ship immediately and prepare for departure!” The three-eyed old man’s final words struck the hearts of the listeners like lightning.

Immediately, the top 1,000 Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars from all four of the rainbow districts began to fly at top speed toward the battleship.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he gritted his teeth and decided that he had no choice but to throw caution to the wind. Howling at the top of his lungs, he joined the crowd flying down toward the battleship.

Almost as soon as he took to flight, Bai Xiaochun could sense the intensely powerful spiritual energy from the Heavenspan Sea slamming into him like a hurricane.

It was a blast that was difficult to endure despite the fact that he was a Core Formation cultivator. Everyone who was flying toward the ship trembled unsteadily for a moment before accelerating toward the ship again.

Everyone was weighing each other up, trying to go along as fast as possible through the battering spiritual energy to prove that they were better.

One of the cultivators flying along was a young woman, who happened to take the lead by a wide margin, flying through the air like a ball of fire. She was Chen Yueshan, and even as she closed in on the battleship and seemed moments away from stepping onto it, a cold snort echoed out as Heretic appeared. With a single step forward, he seemingly teleported, surpassing Chen Yueshan to become the first person to step onto the ship!

When Heretic used what appeared to be a divine ability of teleportation, the other cultivators were shocked, and Chen Yueshan's eyes flickered with a flash of light.

Even Bai Xiaochun sucked in a breath. By using his frigid shadows, he could perform minor teleportations, but what Heretic had done just now was completely different!

Some of the people near Bai Xiaochun knew what it was they had just seen, and cried out in astonishment.

“That was the Wind Dash!”

“Wind Dash?” Bai Xiaochun murmured, taken aback. Meanwhile, more cultivators were landing on the ship. Bai Xiaochun didn't go very quickly, and arrived within the first hundred or so.

Almost immediately, the cultivators who landed on the ship edged away from each other. Clearly, the spirit of competition and rivalry was strong already, and one could only imagine how the situation would intensify when they got to the Wildlands.

As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, these people were all acting like fiends and monsters, so he quickly found an empty corner away from the crowd.

“What's with all the fighting and killing?” he thought. “These people... can't they be more simple and pure like me?” As he looked around, he eventually caught sight of Song Que, Master God-Diviner, and Chen Manyao, which put him in a slightly better mood. However, it wasn't convenient to approach them at the moment.

Off in the distance, he also noticed Gongsun Wan'er, but when he thought about how strange she was, he ducked his head and avoided her gaze.

Chapter 444: 1st Place Zhao Tianjiao

As people continued to alight onto the ancient battleship, the three-eyed old man who had just emerged from the deva rainbow vanished, reappearing on the ship itself. Actually, he wasn't alone; he was joined by five Nascent Soul cultivators.

It seemed as if the ship was just about to set sail, and yet, it was in that moment that a beam of light pierced through the air off in the distance, causing intense whistling sounds to echo through the air.

“How could I, Zhao Tianjiao, not participate in a major event such as this!?”

It was a travel-worn young man, tall and slender, with long black hair and an icy cold aura. Shocking cultivation base fluctuations rolled off him that, despite being at the great circle of the Core Formation stage, felt even more profoundly powerful than that. He actually seemed like a Nascent Soul cultivator, and even though he wasn't quite in that level, as he approached, it was possible to see him occasionally blur to the point of being impossible to see.

In truth, he was actually using a teleportation ability. Although he could only teleport for short distances, he was still only a Core Formation cultivator, which made him shocking to a level that surpassed even Heretic.

It took only a few moments for the young man to reach the ship and land on the deck. As he stood there looking extremely lonely and proud, he was so different from the other cultivators that he was like a full moon in a field of stars!

“It's Eldest Brother!”

“Heavens! Was Eldest Brother teleporting just now?”

“Elder Brother Heretic has his Wind Dash, but Eldest Brother was using real minor teleportations!” Everyone in the crowd was looking at Zhao Tianjiao with expressions of reverence and

respect.

“Hey, I can teleport too!” Bai Xiaochun grumbled to himself in irritation. Although he wasn’t fully convinced that Zhao Tianjiao was as amazing as the crowd apparently thought he was, he had to admit that he had skill. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun could sense from the shocking fluctuations rolling off of him that he was stronger than the statue of Gongsun Wan’er.

The three-eyed Chen Hetian looked over at Zhao Tianjiao, his gaze soft, and yet his words sharp as he said, “And what reason do you have for being late and delaying things?!”

Clasping hands respectfully, Zhao Tianjiao said, “A year ago, a Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect disciple went missing, and in my efforts to find him, I found that these three freaks were responsible. They all fled in different directions, though, which cost me a bit of time.”

With that, he waved his sleeve, causing three heads to tumble down onto the deck.

Two of them were old men, and one was a middle-aged, but all of them had looks of lingering astonishment in their dead eyes. Based on the aura which still remained on them, all three had been Nascent Soul cultivators!

When the surrounding disciples saw the three severed heads, they immediately began to call out in surprise.

“Patriarch Riverwater!”

“Enlightened Sage Headwind!”

“That’s Eccentric Flamecloud!!”

“All three of them are Nascent Soul experts! Heavens.... Eldest Brother actually killed all three of them!!”

“He definitely deserves to be called Eldest Brother!!”

Chen Yueshan’s pupils constricted, but she didn’t say anything,

and as for Heretic, his expression turned extremely grim, and he began to breathe heavily.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he even gasped. Although he had known that Zhao Tianjiao was incredible before, at this point he could tell that he was definitely someone to avoid provoking at all costs.

Looking at the three severed heads, he murmured to himself, "Ah whatever. I'll just have to deal with the fact that [he has a slightly better name than me!](#)"

Chen Hetian nodded slightly and then, without another word, turned and headed to the highest deck on the ship, leaving the Nascent Soul cultivators behind to handle the rest of the disciples.

One of the Nascent Soul cultivators, a middle-aged man, stepped forward with an expressionless face and said, "All of you are Chosen of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and are already somewhat familiar with this trial by fire. As such, we will not waste time with further explanations.

"However, there is one thing that I must make clear. Our voyage will take half a year, and during that time, you will live in quarters assigned to you based on your ranking in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!

"The top 3 will be staying on deck 2. Take your pick of the cabins there to be your own personal immortal's caves. Those of you in 4th to 10th place will stay on deck 3, where you will also have personal immortal's caves within which to further your cultivation.

"Those of you who occupy 11th through 100th place, you will stay on deck 4. Everyone after that will be on deck 5!"

Meanwhile, the ship had already begun to pick up speed as it moved across the surface of the sea; the crashing of waves against the sides of the ship was already audible.

There was also a fierce wind, and a bit of sea spray that carried with it a powerful corrosive element that didn't harm the ship, but could be detrimental to cultivators if it touched them.

Bai Xiaochun was a little nervous about that, but when he heard that everyone was being assigned to their quarters by means of their seniority in the ranking system, he was instantly enlivened.

“Now that's what I'm talking about!” he thought. “The people with higher rankings should have better accommodations!” He already couldn't wait to see what his own immortal's cave would look like.

“Use these identity medallions as keys to your immortal's cave. Very well, you're all dismissed!” With that, the middle-aged cultivator Nascent Soul spun on his heel and flew up to deck 1 with the other Nascent Soul experts, where they entered their own cabins to meditate.

Now that the members of the Senior generation were gone, the 1,000 other cultivators on board all dispersed, apparently eager to get off of the main deck and away from the powerful sea winds and corrosive spray.

Zhao Tianjiao was the first to fly into motion, heading toward deck 2, with Chen Yueshan and Heretic following close behind. Many of the other cultivators were a bit envious of the fact that those three got an entire deck to themselves, and yet, there was nothing that could be done about the matter.

Bai Xiaochun didn't feel any irritation at all. He flew excitedly toward deck 3 with the other top 10 cultivators, including Gongsun Wan'er.

As for the other cultivators, they stewed in their frustration and jealousy as they looked for their own immortal's caves.

Bai Xiaochun was brimming with anticipation as he entered deck 3, and it was to his delight that he discovered that the entire deck

had been renovated and fitted with only seven cabins.

Using the identity medallion he'd been given, he randomly selected one and branded the cabin to himself. Then he opened the door, stepped in, and looked around. Despite everything he had seen and done in his life so far, the sight which met his eyes was such that a gasp of shock escaped his lips.

The cabin was huge, fully 300 meters from side to side. Furthermore, it wasn't actually a single cabin, but a suite of cabins, with seven rooms, plus a pill-concocting workstation. It contained everything a person could possibly need, and was incredibly luxurious.

The floor wasn't made of wood as one might expect on a ship, but rather, green limestone that was suffused with spiritual power. The slabs were partially translucent, and inside of them could be seen swirling mists and clouds. Not only were they beautiful in appearance, but the spiritual energy that emanated from them could be used in cultivation. Furthermore, there were defensive spell formations built into the cabin that also provided complete sound-proofing from the rumbling sounds that echoed outside.

Even more extraordinary was that the cabin came with six puppet handmaidens, who were tasked with keeping the entire cabin in order at all times. On one side of the cabin were windows which provided a spectacular view of the golden sea outside, and there was also a balcony where one could enjoy the sea breeze if one wished, or even do a little fishing.

Considering that it was currently about noontime, and the sun was shining brightly outside, Bai Xiaochun had the sudden impulse to go outside and soak in the warmth of the sun.

The truth was that this cabin was so large that it could fit a hundred people and still have room to spare.

"How luxurious! The fact that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect will treat the higher-ups so much better is... it's wonderful!"

Taking a deep breath, he toured the cabin for a bit before sitting down cross-legged to do some breathing exercises.

Time flashed by. During the three days which followed, Bai Xiaochun only continued to be more pleased with his accommodations. That was especially true when he found that every day, his puppet handmaidens would bring large quantities of spirit food.

The amount of spirit food was so extensive that even after working hard, he couldn't consume it all. For him, life was even better than it had been in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and after eating, he would pat his belly and burp a bit, then lay down on a divan on the balcony to enjoy the sea breeze and the warmth of the sun.

"I'm in the top 10, and things are great. I wonder what the three rooms for Zhao Tianjiao and the others are like? How big are they?"

Thinking of Zhao Tianjiao caused Bai Xiaochun to suddenly be reminded of Song Que and his other Dao protectors. At that point, he realized that, considering how large his room was, and how it was almost empty, he might as well enjoy it with some others. With that thought in mind, he excitedly rushed out of his cabin and headed to deck 4.

The first thing he did was try to get an idea of what the cabins on deck 4 were like. Considering that there were always people coming in and out of one cabin or another, it didn't take long for him to get an answer.

Deck 4 was much smaller than deck 3, and each cabin was only a few dozen meters across. Even still, all of the cabins were single-occupancy. However, when he got down to deck 5, he saw that things were much more cramped.

Quick reminder that Zhao Tianjiao's given name "Tianjiao" uses the same characters as the word I usually translate "Chosen"

Chapter 445: Finally, I Can Get Some Real Food

There were more than a hundred cabins on deck 5, none of them very large. Furthermore, not a single one was a single-occupancy cabin; they were designed to house five people each....

Although each person in each cabin had a separate living area which they could seal off with a spell formation, comparing these quarters to Bai Xiaochun's accommodations was like comparing the earth to the heavens or the dirt to the clouds.

After looking around for a while, he found Master God-Diviner's cabin, where Master God-Diviner sat looking around anxiously at his murky surroundings. The mere thought of spending half a year in conditions like this left him feeling very sullen.

Just as he was about to become completely and utterly dispirited, Bai Xiaochun appeared....

"Junior Patriarch...." he cried.

"Alright," Bai Xiaochun said with the wave of his hand, "you're coming with me. My place is plenty big." Master God-Diviner was instantly elated, and to the envy of the other cultivators in the cabin, he hurried over to Bai Xiaochun's side.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, clasped his hands behind his back, and went about looking for his other friends. Eventually, he found Song Que who, by chance, was in the same cabin as Chen Manyao.

As soon as Chen Manyao saw Bai Xiaochun, she flashed him a radiant smile that couldn't have been more enticing. As for Song Que, his face was already about as grim as it could be; the past few days had been extremely annoying to him, considering that this was the first time he had ever stayed in a room with other people.

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun said, "Que'er, your aunt entrusted you to

me, so how could I possibly stand idly by while you suffer? Why don't you come along with your uncle? I feast on spirit food every day, and have so much I can't even finish it all."

Song Que's face darkened, and he glared at Bai Xiaochun with gritted teeth.

Of course, that made Bai Xiaochun feel wonderful. He knew that Song Que didn't like him, and therefore, he didn't like Song Que very much, and would occasionally find opportunities to intentionally mock him.

Just when Bai Xiaochun was about to invite Chen Manyao to come with him, she spoke up.

"I'll come with you, big bro Xiaochun. I know you feast on spirit food every day, and have so much you can't finish it. I'll help you with that problem!" Covering her smile with her hand, she glided over to Bai Xiaochun side, where she joined Master God-Diviner.

Seeing that Song Que wasn't even going to say a word, Bai Xiaochun shook his head and turned to leave. However, he stopped at the door and looked back at Song Que.

"You're really not coming? The spiritual energy in my cabin is much stronger than it is here, so your cultivation will proceed more quickly."

Song Que really didn't want to go, but the truth was that he didn't know any of the other cultivators in his cabin on deck 5. The idea of having to spend half a year with them darkened his mood even further.

Then he heard Bai Xiaochun mention that the spiritual energy in his cabin was strong, and would aid in cultivation. That finally gave Song Que the excuse he needed.

"I have to surpass him," he thought. "A true man knows when to stand tall and when to submit. I can't let myself fall too far behind during this half year. The only reason I'm doing this is for

cultivation purposes, and that's all!" After convincing himself in this fashion, Song Que clenched his jaw and rose to his feet, face grimmer than ever as he walked over to Bai Xiaochun's side.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised, having been certain that Song Que wouldn't join him. Claspng Song Que's shoulder, he said, "That's the spirit! We're all one big family, right? Considering the relationship between myself and your aunt, you should listen to me more closely in the future. After all, when did your uncle ever treat you unfairly?"

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun felt more than ever like someone from the older generation, and knew that he had to take care of Song Que no matter how he did it. Then, after he got back to the River-Defying Sect, he would make sure Song Junwan knew all about it. She would definitely be pleased.

Sighing, he led all of his Dao protectors back to deck 3....

After entering Bai Xiaochun's cabin, not even Song Que's willpower could prevent him from gasping and looking around with shock at the size of the room, the spirit food, the puppets, the limestone floor, and the balcony. Almost immediately, he felt stabs of pain pricking at his heart....

In that moment, he madly swore an oath in his heart that he would focus fully on cultivation, and strive for his own chance to break into the top 10. The difference in treatment between that group and where he was at almost couldn't be described in words.

In fact, that difference was so great that Song Que could even feel his eyes getting a bit moist.

As for Master God-Diviner, he also gasped, and was instantly drawn to the windows. During the past three days, the only way he had been able to feel the sun on his face was to go to the main deck, but things were too noisy there, and the spray from the waves was too dangerous. But in Bai Xiaochun's cabin, one could look out the windows at any time, or even sit on the safety of the balcony.

Master God-Diviner was instantly overwhelmed with excitement.

As for Chen Manyao, she was also stunned into silence. Before, she had assumed the difference in accommodations would be big, but not this big. As of this moment, she couldn't help but feel a bit irked at how the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had arranged things.

The looks on their faces caused Bai Xiaochun to sigh. He hadn't actually intended to show off in this situation, and was now worried that his friends might misunderstand his intentions. As such, he quickly tried to explain how he felt.

"This is all my fault," he said. "If I had worked a bit harder, maybe I could have made it into the top 3. I heard that their accommodations are even better than these, and bigger. Mine are only so-so...." Bai Xiaochun really was just trying to smooth things over, but the result was that even stranger looks appeared on the faces of his three friends.

Seeing this, Bai Xiaochun was just getting ready to try to explain things further, when all of a sudden, an ear-piercing cry rang out from the sea outside. The cabin was protected by a spell formation, so the fact that the cry was distinctly audible went to show how incredibly powerful it was. In fact, the entire battleship even began to sway from side to side a bit.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell, and his three Dao protectors had similar reactions. All of them rushed over to the balcony and looked out, whereupon they saw a streak of silver light shooting out of the sea and up into the sky.

That streak of light was what had caused the noise just now, and had also sent a huge wave slamming into the side of the ship. As such, it was possible to imagine that whatever it was that was causing that light was extraordinary!

Gasping, Bai Xiaochun craned his neck in an attempt to see what was inside of the light, and almost immediately could tell that it was something with a Heaven-Dao aura!

Although others might not notice it, because Bai Xiaochun had a Heaven-Dao Gold Core, he was more acutely attuned to such matters.

“What is that...?” he thought. At this point, he couldn’t hold back from opening his Heavenspan Dharma Eye. Almost immediately, rumbling sounds filled his mind, and he felt stabbing pain in his forehead. He quickly closed his third eye, which had already begun to leak some blood.

Even in that short moment, Bai Xiaochun had been able to catch a glimpse of what was in the light, and it left his mind and heart battered by waves of shock!

Within that light was a silver-colored dragon!

Apparently, that dragon was injured, and even as it flew along, silver blood leaked from its wounds....

In the instant that the silver dragon appeared, the three-eyed deva Chen Hetian was meditating on deck 1. Suddenly, all of his eyes opened, and his expression flickered with incredulity and joy.

“A silvermoon dragonfish!!” he shouted. “Kong Lie, the five of you come with me right now. We’re going to catch that beast!”

With that, he vanished, to reappear a moment later up in midair. As for the five Nascent Soul cultivators, they teleported out to join Chen Hetian. Even as they appeared out in the open, expressions shining with anticipation, the silver light began to disappear over the horizon.

“Let’s go! If we get that dragonfish, I’ll give all five of you an incredible reward!” Chen Hetian’s eyes burned with passion as he and the five Nascent Soul cultivators shot off into the distance.

Many of the other cultivators on the ship could tell that something strange was going on, and had hurried up to the main deck. When they saw what was happening, various expressions appeared on their faces.

On deck 2, Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan appeared to see what the commotion was about, with Heretic being the only one who didn't react.

Although no one noticed, Gongsun Wan'er was in her cabin, standing at the window and looking at the silver light fading off into the distance. A strange smile could be seen on her face, and on the tip of her index finger was a single drop of silver blood, which she quickly licked away.

"Finally, I can get some real food," she said with a chuckle.

Considering how fast Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul cultivators were moving, and the speed of the battleship, it only took about ten breaths of time before they were completely separated.

Everyone on the battleship began to discuss matters, but soon the talk quieted down. With the deva and the Nascent Soul cultivators gone, and the vast sea stretching out in all directions, a sense of unease filled the hearts of everyone present.

Time passed. Three days later, Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul cultivators still weren't back, and everyone aboard the battleship felt greater pressure weighing down on their shoulders. Furthermore, there was a strange and mysterious aura that seemed to be building up around them.

Chapter 446: Dinner? Tonight?

Days passed. Song Que, Master God-Diviner and Chen Manyao all had their own personal space in Bai Xiaochun's cabin, and were able to enjoy the treatment that only cultivators in the top ten of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars could receive. Filled with gratitude, they did their best to focus on their cultivation.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't very far from the great circle of Core Formation, and couldn't help but feel that he was already quite formidable. Therefore, he spent most of his time basking in the sun on his balcony and looking out at the sea, which was exactly what he was doing right now.

The main deck of the ship wasn't very far above Bai Xiaochun's balcony, and among the cultivators there was Gongsun Wan'er, who was apparently also staring out at the sea.

Bai Xiaochun finally looked away from the sea water and then took a long swig of spirit alcohol.

"Now this is the life!" he said with a sigh. Behind him were two puppet hand maidens who were massaging his shoulders.

Occasionally, huge waves would roll across the surface of the water, but at the moment, it looked more like a beautiful golden mirror. By this point, Bai Xiaochun was used to the wind, and as for the sea water, because of the techniques he cultivated, it wouldn't harm him unless he was exposed to it for long periods of time.

Furthermore, because of the spell formation built into the battleship, the incredibly intense spiritual energy in the water was softened and purified before entering the ship.

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun looked back at his huge cabin, and saw Song Que, Master God-Diviner, and Chen Manyao all sitting cross-legged in meditation, apparently completely focused on their

cultivation. Feeling a bit bored, he decided that he should probably go find someone to chat with.

“These guys are too focused on cultivation. This half a year is a time to enjoy things. Once we reach our destination, we’ll be heading into the outposts of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and the Great Wall.... Things definitely won’t be as comfortable there.

“Wouldn’t it be great if Xu Baocai were here?” Taking another drink of spirit alcohol, he was just contemplating how to alleviate his boredom when, all of a sudden, he saw a golden flash of light off in the distance.

Some distance away, a school of golden fish had just leapt up out of the sea water, flashing through the air like golden sparks before splashing back down into the water.

Considering how sharp Bai Xiaochun’s vision was, he could see the fish quite clearly, and was able to tell that they were about as long as a human arm. They were covered with glittering golden scales, and most shocking of all, had two heads! Furthermore, those two heads weren’t located next to each other. Rather, the second head was where a fish’s tail would normally be.

“Golden loaches!!” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed, shooting to his feet. He recognized these strange fish from one of the volumes of spirit creatures he had studied in the Spirit Stream Sect, and knew that they were a very rare type of spirit fish!

Such spirit fish didn’t need to be refined into medicinal pills to be consumed as food. They were a precious material of heaven and earth that could strengthen the qi passageways and bolster divine sense. Fish like that could be very useful for cultivators, and if they were older than a hundred years of age, could even help when stepping into the Nascent Soul stage.

As Bai Xiaochun looked excitedly out at the sea, the school of golden loaches once again broke the surface of the water. Then a huge amount of water exploded up as a fish ten times larger than

any of the other ones launched itself up into the air.

Just like the other fish, it was golden in color and had two heads. However, there was something ancient to this one, as though it had lived for a very long time. Furthermore, its scales glittered with a golden light that surpassed the other fish.

“A hundred-year-old golden loach!!” Gasping, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, sending a stream of frigid qi out which instantly wrapped around the fish. However, a stream of power shot back toward him, destabilizing his cultivation base and very nearly dragging him off of the balcony.

Expression flickering, he quickly called out at the top of his lungs, “Que’er, Master Snortsnort, Little Manyao, hurry up and help me! I hooked a precious treasure here!”

Song Que, Master God-Diviner, and Chen Manyao immediately opened their eyes from meditation. Song Que seemed a bit irritated, and Master God-Diviner was also slightly annoyed. As for Chen Manyao, she had the same smile on her face that she usually did. However, when all of them looked over and saw the huge loach leaping into and out of the water, their eyes went wide. Song Que was the first to rush out, followed by Chen Manyao and Master God-Diviner.

“Hurry up and help me!” Bai Xiaochun said excitedly. “If we can catch this fish, we’ll have a great dinner tonight!” With that, he poured some more cultivation base power into his efforts. Thankfully, as a member of the Spirit Stream Sect, he had been cultivating control power for quite some time, and was very familiar with it. Therefore, despite the fact that the fish had already dropped back down under the surface of the water, he still managed to maintain a connection to it.

The struggling of the enormous fish was causing huge waves to roll out, along with intense crashing sounds. Thankfully, Song Que and the others quickly arrived to help. Song Que’s right hand

flashed with an incantation gesture, and a shadow spread out from his feet and into the water. Although the water weakened it a bit, it still managed to shoot directly toward the huge fish.

Master God-Diviner also performing an incantation gesture as he unleashed the power of a magical item.

Chen Manyao's actions were the strangest of all; after performing an incantation gesture, she opened her mouth and spat out a pink cloud, which rapidly shrank down into the shape of a mist hawk that let out a piercing cry as it dove toward the fish.

Bai Xiaochun let out a whoop of excitement. Moments ago, he had been bored, but now everything had changed.

"Come on everybody, don't hold anything back!" he shouted. "We can't let this fish get away!" Bai Xiaochun's excitement was rubbing off on the others, whose hearts began to pound. Considering how much this huge fish was struggling, they all could tell that it wasn't anything ordinary.

The fish struggled mightily, even letting out muffled cries that reached the cultivators who were gathered on the deck. As for Gongsun Wan'er, she wasn't too far away from Bai Xiaochun's position, and when she looked down, she could actually see the fish, as well as Bai Xiaochun and his Dao protectors.

Laughing softly in amusement, she waved her finger in the direction of the huge fish, unleashing her own cultivation base power to aid Bai Xiaochun and the others.

Bai Xiaochun sensed that Gongsun Wan'er was helping them, and was quite moved.

"Wan'er!" he shouted. "Help us reel in this fish and we'll all have a great dinner!"

Gongsun Wan'er looked down at Bai Xiaochun, smiled, and said, "Dinner? You mean tonight?"

"Yeah!" he replied, not thinking much about her question. Under

the combined efforts of the group, the struggling fish slowly weakened, and soon, they managed to heave it up out of the water toward the battleship.

Laughing excitedly, Bai Xiaochun extended his hands to grab the fish. Simultaneously, excited smiles broke out on the faces of Song Que, Master God-Diviner and even Chen Manyao. Although catching his huge fish hadn't involved any danger, they were out in the middle of the Heavenspan Sea, and had worked quite hard to succeed.

However, even as the huge fish flew through the air, a figure burst into motion from the deck, moving like lighting to unleash his great circle Core Formation cultivation base power. Before anyone could do anything, he had waved his finger in the direction of the fish.

Instantly, a huge hand appeared in the middle of the air, which rumbled toward the exhausted fish, and then hit it with such intense power that it instantly died!

Next, the hand wrapped around the fish and pulled it back toward a young man on the deck of the ship, who swished his sleeve to pull the fish into his bag of holding.

“What are you doing!?” Bai Xiaochun shouted, enraged. Unable to react in time, he had no choice but to fly up to the deck, fuming with anger. Song Que, Master God-Diviner, and Chen Manyao all joined him, where they confronted the young man face-to-face.

“Hey,” Bai Xiaochun said, “we saw that fish first, and we’re the ones who weakened it. We were just about to grab it, you thief!”

Shockingly, the young man in front of them had once been in the top 3 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, but was now in 5th place. His name was... Ji Fang!

“Are you kidding me?” Ji Fang said, a cruel expression twisting his face. “I have the fish now. It’s mine!” Of course, he completely

ignored Song Que and the others, and only looked at Bai Xiaochun and Gongsun Wan'er, albeit with complete scorn.

Chapter 447: The Return Of The Unclean Thing!

Ji Fang had been eyeing the golden loach the entire time. Virtually everyone on the battleship had almost instantly begun to covet it, with the exception of Zhao Tianjiao, Chen Yueshan and Heretic.

Therefore, Ji Fang had simply decided to snatch it in the heat of the moment. Although he did fear Bai Xiaochun to some extent, he was confident that he could handle him, even if he teamed up with Gongsun Wan'er.

After all, Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one with people to back him up; Ji Fang had his own followers. Therefore, he didn't even bother to respond, and simply turned on his heel and walked off.

"Insufferable bully!" Bai Xiaochun grumbled angrily. To have his belongings openly robbed was a bitter pill to swallow, and he was just about to step forward to prevent Ji Fang from leaving when Master God-Diviner grabbed his arm.

"Junior Patriarch, just let it go. Ji Fang used to be in the top 3, and even though he's dropped down to 5th place, he's still terrifyingly powerful!"

"It's just a fish," Song Que said through gritted teeth as he watched Ji Fang walking away, "There's no need to get into a big fight over it. That might make things problematic once we reach the sect outposts."

Considering that everyone was persuading him to back down, Bai Xiaochun clenched his jaw and let out a cold harrumph. He could tell that both Song Que and Master God-Diviner felt the same way and didn't want to offend Ji Fang. Even if Bai Xiaochun made a move on his own, it would still drag them into it, so therefore, he really had no choice other than to just grin and bear it.

“That guy is too overbearing,” he muttered. “With a personality like that, he’ll definitely get killed once we reach the Wildlands!” With that, he returned dejectedly to his cabin.

After the scene was over, only Gongsun Wan’er remained standing there. Although no one noticed it, she was chuckling as she watched Ji Fang walking away. Then she licked her lips, a strange light flickering in her eyes.

“Looks yummy,” she murmured to herself.

Nothing happened that night for Bai Xiaochun. He sat cross-legged in meditation, mulling over the day’s events and feeling more irritated by the moment.

“I can’t just let this drop,” he thought. “Ji Fang might have some skills, but I have even more skills! I have to think of a way to teach him a lesson he won’t ever forget!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he opened his bag of holding to look for the little turtle, but even after searching around for quite a while, couldn’t find him.

By the time the first rays of dawn emerged, he was feeling more depressed than ever. However, it was at that point that the still and quiet atmosphere of the battleship was broken by a bloodcurdling scream that echoed out from deck 3, the very same deck that Bai Xiaochun’s cabin was on.

There was something terrifying about that scream, as if it had been fueled by a life force that was in the midst of being extinguished. Quite a few people heard the scream, including Bai Xiaochun.

“What’s going on!?”

Song Que and the other Dao protectors opened their eyes and looked around, shocked. Before long, the other top 10 chosen on deck 3 began to emerge, Bai Xiaochun included.

Even Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan came down from deck 2,

and joined in as everyone searched for the origin of the scream!

It didn't take long before they discovered that one of the cabins on deck 3 had a shriveled corpse in it!

The corpse was discovered in Ji Fang's cabin... and after examining it closely, everyone could tell that it was none other than Ji Fang himself!

"This...." Bai Xiaochun said with a gasp.

Ji Fang had been withered dry to the point where he was almost unrecognizable. Despite being little more than a skeleton, he clearly hadn't been dead for long, and yet, already seemed to be rotting. Everyone present was a Core Formation cultivator and a top chosen, and therefore, it didn't take long before they all noticed... that Ji Fang had died in a very strange way. Apparently, all of his blood had been drained away!!

Gasps and looks of astonishment appeared on the faces of everyone present. After all, Ji Fang was in the great circle of Core Formation, and possessed incredible battle prowess. And yet, there were no signs of magical combat in the area, as though Ji Fang had been killed in the briefest of instants!

Even more telling was that Ji Fang's cabin was filled with intense, frigid coldness, something that caused everyone's minds to tremble.

Bai Xiaochun stared mutely at Ji Fang's corpse, his eyes wide with incredulity. He had been thinking about Ji Fang all night, and never could have imagined that the following day, he would actually be dead.

"He really died?" Bai Xiaochun was having trouble controlling his breathing, especially when he realized that the corpse itself actually looked very familiar. Before he could put much thought into it, the faces of Master God-Diviner and Song Que drained of blood, and looks of fear began to shine in their eyes.

Chen Manyao also gasped, and a look of fear spread out across her face.

If the three-eyed Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul cultivators had been present, things might not have been as terrifying. But all of those members of the Senior generation were gone, and none of the Core Formation disciples present were quite sure what to do. Therefore, everyone looked to Zhao Tianjiao to take the lead. After approaching the corpse and examining it for a moment, his expression flickered and he said, “It seems that some sort of unclean thing is on board the ship with us. Everyone needs to be extra careful!”

All the disciples present shivered in fear, and as for Bai Xiaochun, he felt his scalp going numb. Unfortunately, the mystery of Ji Fang’s death was not something that could be explained at the moment, so everyone eventually dispersed, maintaining full vigilance along the way.

Heart pounding with fear, Bai Xiaochun returned to his cabin with Song Que, Master God-Diviner and Chen Manyao. As soon as they were all inside, he closed the door and then looked at his ashen-faced friends.

Worried that he might be reading too much into the situation, he tentatively asked, “Did you guys also think that corpse looked familiar...?”

Face filled with alarm and terror, Master God-Diviner replied, “Junior Patriarch... that corpse... reminds me of the corpses back in the River-Defying Sect!”

“It looks exactly the same!” Song Que growled.

“I noticed it too,” Chen Manyao said after a moment. “This corpse looks just like those other corpses....”

Upon hearing their responses, Bai Xiaochun felt like his scalp was tingling so hard it was going to explode. Considering how familiar

the corpse seemed, and coupled with Zhao Tianjiao's words, he couldn't help but think about what had happened back in the River-Defying Sect. Now, the confirmation of his three Dao protectors left him convinced that the two events were connected.

"Dammit!" he wailed. "How could this be happening? I... I came all the way here, and that unclean thing followed the entire way...?" The more he thought about it, the stranger it and more terrifying it seemed. In fact, he immediately produced some evil-warding talismans from his bag of holding and plastered them onto himself.

Of course, that wasn't enough for him. He quickly urged Master God-Diviner and Song Que to help him set up some more spell formations in the cabin. Then he went into his own private room and set up some additional spell formations, and also made sure he had plenty of Soul Convergence Pills ready.

"I have evil-warding talismans, spell formations, and Soul Convergence Pills. If that unclean thing has any sense at all, it won't dare to provoke me.... Yeah, that's right. If it provokes me, it will definitely meet a miserable end!" Scowling on the verge of tears, he continued to try to encourage himself with the fact that Song Que and the others were also present. Considering that they were around, it wasn't likely that the unclean thing would come for him.

But then he remembered that Ji Fang had been in the great circle of Core Formation. Considering that he was also in the Core Formation stage, that left him feeling more unprotected and unsafe than ever. The image of Ji Fang's desiccated, blood-drained corpse remained floating in his mind constantly.

"Just what kind of ghost are we dealing with...?" he thought. "When is that deva Chen Hetian going to get back...?"

It was in this manner that he stewed in his anxiety and vigilance for an entire night.

He wasn't the only nervous one, of course. Song Que, Master God-Diviner, Chen Manyao, and all the other chosen on deck 3, and even the disciples on decks 4 and 5, were all very anxious.

If any other person had been killed, it probably wouldn't have been a big deal. But Ji Fang had been in 5th place in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, with extraordinary battle prowess. And yet, he had still met a bizarre and grisly fate, leaving everyone feeling completely ill at ease.

When dawn came, and people checked around and found that no one else had died, people finally began to breathe sighs of relief. Bai Xiaochun was slightly less anxious, but not by much. Taking advantage of the daylight, he set up more spell formations both inside and outside of his room. Sadly, he wasn't good at creating paper talismans, otherwise he would have painted many, many more such items to ward off evil spirits.

Three days passed by in a flash. No one died, and soon, the atmosphere on the ship returned to normal. People once again went up onto the main deck. However, everyone still felt a great weight on their hearts, and often looked up into the sky, hoping to see three-eyed Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul cultivators returning.

Eventually, half a month went by.... And yet, Chen Hetian and the other still were not back. However, no one had been killed during that time. At long last, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief.

“Maybe I was mistaken. Maybe Ji Fang was killed, not by the unclean thing, but by... that big fish?”

Chapter 448: Junior Brother Bai, A Word Please?

After much thought, Bai Xiaochun wasn't able to determine whether or not the hundred-year-old loach could possibly have been the cause of death. However, he knew that he definitely couldn't come up with any answers locked in his room, so eventually, he called on his Dao protectors to discuss the matter further.

Over the past few days, his Dao protectors had been too rattled to focus fully on cultivation, but once they heard this new fish theory of Bai Xiaochun's, they began to calm down.

Finally, after more than half a month of remaining in seclusion, Bai Xiaochun emerged and headed up to the main deck. There, he happened to catch sight of Gongsun Wan'er, who also seemed to have come up to the deck to relieve her boredom. Upon catching sight of Bai Xiaochun and his Dao protectors, she smiled and joined them.

Most of the cultivators on the deck were grouped together in twos or threes, although a few of them stood by themselves.

As such, Bai Xiaochun's group was the largest present. Song Que was walking behind him, radiating his usual murderous aura that made him seem completely unapproachable. Master God-Diviner was walking next to him, looking almost like his personal assistant. And then there was Gongsun Wan'er on one side with her incredible good looks, and Chen Manyao on the other side with her spectacular beauty. Together, they made quite a sight.

Many of the cultivators in the area looked over at Bai Xiaochun, and although some of them had cold looks on their faces, many seemed envious.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath of sea air, looked up into the

sky, and then gazed out at the golden sea. Gradually, the weight in his heart seemed to lessen.

“Ai,” he sighed. “I can’t believe our wonderful voyage took such a turn for the worse.” Looking around at the crowd, he suddenly realized that a lot of people were looking at him. Turning, he realized that Gongsun Wan’er and Chen Manyao were right by him, and by chance, both of them happened to be smiling at him. They were two different smiles, and two different facial expressions, but they were both very beautiful. All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun’s mood got even better.

As of that moment, he discovered a new hobby. In the following days, he would take time every day to go for a stroll on deck, and would always make sure to chat openly with Chen Manyao and Gongsun Wan’er. As they smiled and laughed with him, many of the other cultivators in the area would look over enviously.

The more looks like that he got, the more he liked this new hobby, and at the same time, he felt less distant from Gongsun Wan’er.

“Gongsun Wan’er really is pretty when she smiles,” he thought, glancing around proudly at the crowd. As he did, he noticed that up ahead, Zhao Tianjiao was standing there, looking as cold as a statue.

During the past few days, he had caught sight of Zhao Tianjiao a few times, as well as Chen Yueshan. Both of them were superstars in the top 3, with extremely high status. They were the type of people who didn’t need to have an entourage to provoke countless envious glances from the surrounding cultivators.

As Zhao Tianjiao walked along, a group of seven or eight other cultivators trailed along behind him, looking very subservient. Bai Xiaochun actually recognized some of them from back on Sky Quarter Rainbow, when he’d gone around asking for help to get some seven-colored mistysea grass.

Lowering his voice, he leaned over and said, “Hey Master Snortsnort, why do you think all of the superstars are so cold-looking? Zhao Tianjiao looks like he’s above everyone else, and it’s the same with Chen Yueshan and Heretic. They hardly ever hang out with anybody else, and spend most of their time in secluded meditation.”

Master God-Diviner hesitated for a moment and then said, “Well, ummm... maybe they act that way because everyone expects them to be like that.”

Even as Bai Xiaochun contemplated this possibility, he looked over at Zhao Tianjiao, and found that Zhao Tianjiao had turned and was looking back at him.

Suddenly, their gazes met.

Although Zhao Tianjiao’s expression was placid, there was something intense within his eyes that Bai Xiaochun found to be almost painful. Of course, although Bai Xiaochun was definitely the type who feared death, he was not the type who shrank back when someone simply looked at him. As soon as he felt the painful intensity of Zhao Tianjiao’s gaze, his own eyes began to shine as he stared back.

Though no sound could be heard from the interlocking of their gazes, both of their minds filled with intense fluctuations. Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered, and he stopped walking, and then Zhao Tianjiao retracted his vision. And yet, unlike Bai Xiaochun, Zhao Tianjiao didn’t stop walking. Instead... he headed in Bai Xiaochun’s direction.

Zhao Tianjiao occupied 1st place among the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, so no matter where he went, he was always the center of attention. When people realized that he was walking toward Bai Xiaochun, everyone began to pay close attention.

That was especially true considering that he was flanked by seven or eight followers, making it seem like a grand procession.

Song Que's expression turned very serious, and although Master God-Diviner initially gaped in shock, his expression quickly became the same as Song Que's. Even Chen Manyao looked surprised. The only one among the group whose expression was the same as ever was Gongsun Wan'er, who even seemed interested to see what would happen with Zhao Tianjiao.

As Zhao Tianjiao proceeded forward, silence fell upon the main deck. Everyone was watching as he slowly came to a stop right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

His expression was as cold as ice, and he looked like a glistening, unsheathed sword, as powerful as a mountain who could look down upon everything below him. As he measured Bai Xiaochun up, Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, wondering what exactly was going on. After all, he and Zhao Tianjiao had only ever seen each other a few times, and had never even exchanged words.

After a moment, Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold back from saying, "Elder Brother Zhao?"

Almost as soon as the words left Bai Xiaochun's mouth, Zhao Tianjiao responded in a cold voice, "Junior Brother Bai, a word please?"

Although Zhao Tianjiao didn't unleash any of his aura, considering his status and accomplishments in battle, he was the type of person that would leave anyone feeling cold with fear.

"Huh?" Bai Xiaochun replied, feeling a bit shocked. After a moment of thought, he nodded. The truth was that he wasn't scared, just curious as to why a superstar like Zhao Tianjiao would want to talk with him.

Zhao Tianjiao's face remained as cold as ever as he headed toward the prow of the ship. As he neared, the cultivators who had originally been gathered there backed away to make room.

More curious than ever, Bai Xiaochun followed along. Of course,

he maintained his vigilance the entire way; although he doubted that Zhao Tianjiao had any ill intentions, he was prepared for anything.

Soon Bai Xiaochun and Zhao Tianjiao were alone at the prow of the ship, whereupon Zhao Tianjiao waved his right hand, causing a glittering shield of light to rise up that cut them off completely from everything outside. Clearly, this was not a defensive shield, but rather something that would block both sound and divine sense alike. As of this moment, the two of them would be able to speak freely without anyone else being able to hear.

Bai Xiaochun's curiosity continued to mount as he looked expectantly at Zhao Tianjiao, waiting to hear what he had to say.

Zhao Tianjiao stood there quietly for a moment looking at Bai Xiaochun, his expression extremely solemn, as though he were wrestling with an important issue. Bai Xiaochun's curiosity was reaching the boiling point, and as for everyone else on the main deck, they were watching the scene play out with various expressions on their faces.

"I wonder why Eldest Brother wants to talk with Bai Xiaochun?"

"Something strange is going on... could it have something to do with the death of Ji Fang?"

"Now that I think about, there was some friction between Ji Fang and Bai Xiaochun right before Ji Fang died...."

All sorts of speculations filled the hearts of the onlookers.

Even as Bai Xiaochun was going to try to make his own guess, Zhao Tianjiao took a deep breath and said, "Junior Brother Bai...."

Bai Xiaochun leaned forward intently.

Looking very serious, Zhao Tianjiao said, "Junior Brother Bai, those... those two girls you hang out with are pretty good-looking...."

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, stunned. Considering the serious look on Zhao Tianjiao’s face, he almost wondered if he had misheard him.

“Um... listen, don’t take this the wrong way, Junior Brother. I don’t have any feelings for them.... I just want to know how you managed to win them over. I’ve been watching you the past few days, and really want to understand how you managed to get two hotties like that to hang out with you.” Zhao Tianjiao had a somber expression on his cold-looking face. He seemed tall and proud, like an unsheathed sword. And yet, the words he spoke caused Bai Xiaochun’s eyes to go as wide as saucers.

Had he not heard the words with his own two ears, Zhao Tianjiao’s somber expression would have made it completely impossible for Bai Xiaochun to guess what it was he wanted to talk about. It was completely unexpected....

Bai Xiaochun scratched his head, feeling a bit confused. Without even thinking about it, he said, “They’re the ones who took to hanging out with me. I couldn’t get rid of them if I tried....”

When Zhao Tianjiao hear this, his expression turned even more serious than before, and he even frowned. Considering his status and incredible battle prowess, a frown like that would make anyone who saw it feel like a thunderstorm were descending.

Of course, no one could hear what the two of them were talking about. They could only see the expressions on their faces. First, they saw the incredulity and disbelief of Bai Xiaochun, and immediately began to come up with explanations for why he was reacting in such a way.

“Something big is happening! Look you guys! Bai Xiaochun is shaking his head. Now he’s explaining something!”

“This is really weird. Look at Eldest Brother’s expression. It’s even more serious than before. It’s almost like... he doesn’t believe what Bai Xiaochun just told him!”

Chapter 449: So, You're That Kind Of Person....

As the onlookers speculated about what was happening, Song Que and Master God-Diviner looked on in shock, completely unable to come up with any ideas of what Zhao Tianjiao and Bai Xiaochun might be talking about. Even Chen Manyao seemed very curious.

Gongsun Wan'er was the only one with a slight smile on her face.

Meanwhile, up at the front of the ship, Bai Xiaochun was only just now recovering from his shock. It was with a very odd expression that he looked at Zhao Tianjiao, pondering how this was the 1st place Eldest Brother from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, a person with a profound cultivation base, who could cut down Nascent Soul experts....

“Hm, this is the kind of guy I should probably make friends with,” he thought. “That way, if someone picks on me in the Wildlands, I'll have someone to help me out. Things will probably go much more smoothly with a friend like him.” With these thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun smiled and patted Zhao Tianjiao's shoulder like he would a close companion. Voice as casual as a spring breeze, he said, “Eldest Brother....”

Zhao Tianjiao wasn't used to people touching him, and was about to back away, when he heard Bai Xiaochun's tone of voice, and could tell that he was speaking with heartfelt sincerity. Therefore, he allowed Bai Xiaochun to continue to clasp his shoulder.

“You have to trust me on this one, Eldest Brother. Those two girls you saw me with, there are only two of them, right? Well, back in the River-Defying Sect, I got love letters from tens of thousands of girls!” Bai Xiaochun sighed and tried not to look proud of himself.

Assuming that Bai Xiaochun must be exaggerating, Zhao Tianjiao frowned.

Of course, the expressions playing out on their faces fueled more discussions among the onlookers. That was especially true when Bai Xiaochun clasped Zhao Tianjiao's shoulder, and Zhao Tianjiao didn't back away. Shocked expressions appeared on the faces of everyone present.

To these people, Zhao Tianjiao occupied the highest of high positions, and was a completely proud and aloof figure. He was the type of cold person that no one could ever get close to. Therefore, to see this sudden change in behavior was quite shocking.

Back at the prow of the ship, Zhao Tianjiao was frowning in disappointment at Bai Xiaochun. In fact, he was actually planning to simply turn and leave.

"Hey! You still don't believe me? Alright, look at this!" Bai Xiaochun hated when people didn't trust what he said, so he quickly patted his bag of holding, causing a rustling sound to fill the air as vast quantities of love letters began to spill out like rain.

There were so many of them that they quickly formed a tiny mountain right there on the deck. Zhao Tianjiao gasped, his eyes going wide with shock and disbelief. He even picked up a few of the letters and read them, whereupon an expression of even greater astonishment appeared. It quickly became obvious that all of the love letters were written by different people, and were not fake. There were even some jade slips in the pile, within which could be seen the beautiful faces of the girls who had delivered them....

"Th-this... this...."

Zhao Tianjiao was starting to pant, and his heart trembled fiercely as it was battered by waves of shock. He looked up slowly at Bai Xiaochun, the same expression in his eyes that he would have if he was facing a deva.

Swishing his sleeve proudly, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and said, “See? Now do you believe me? And this is only some of my collection. I have more in my bag of holding. With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun, won over the hearts of countless female cultivators in the River-Defying Sect!”

The strange scene which was now playing out caused the hearts and minds of the onlookers to be filled with both shock and speculation. No one could hear the words being spoken, and divine sense was useless, so all they could do was watch what was happening.

When people saw the huge pile of letters pouring out of Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding, they gaped in shock. At first, many people didn’t take the letters to be anything special, but soon people realized that many of them were folded up into the shape of hearts.

“What are those things? Heavens! Eldest Brother is actually going through and reading some of them! Why do I get the feeling that those are love letters?”

“Nah. No way! Have you ever seen anyone with that many love letters? There must be more than 10,000 of them! They’re obviously not love letters! Besides, look at the expression on Eldest Brother’s face. He’s clearly privy to some mysterious secret, right?”

“How come this Bai Xiaochun only proves to be more and more enigmatic?!?!?”

Of course, when Chen Manyao recognized the love letters, she made a ‘pshaw’ sound, seemingly unsure of whether to laugh or cry.

Before people could look at the scene too closely to analyze what was happening, Zhao Tianjiao took a deep breath and waved his hand, causing the sound barrier to suddenly blur, making it impossible for anyone to even see the two of them.

Expression extremely somber and profoundly sincere, Zhao Tianjiao clasped hands and bowed deeply to Bai Xiaochun.

“Junior Brother Bai, I almost can’t believe that someone as young as you has such uncanny skill. I wonder if you might be willing to deign to teach me a thing or two?”

Bai Xiaochun was yet again taken aback by the strange sight of Zhao Tianjiao looking so serious and yet uttering such words.

“You want to learn that kind of stuff?” Bai Xiaochun asked quizzically.

Eyes shining with solemnity, Zhao Tianjiao took a deep breath and yet again bowed deeply. “Junior Brother Bai, please teach me. I want to be happy in life, and if you can bless me with such kindness, I’ll never forget it for as long as I live!!”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a couple times as he finally came to realize what was going on. Zhao Tianjiao was clearly the type of person who seemed cold and distant on the outside, but was secretly very passionate and romantic. After a moment, Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily.

“Hey, we’re brothers, right? What do you mean teach you a thing or two? Let’s schedule some time and I’ll teach you everything I know. Just tell me which girl it is that you like. There’s no challenge that Love Saint Bai Xiaochun can’t handle!” He even slapped his chest confidently to emphasize his words.

Zhao Tianjiao heaved a long sigh of relief. They immediately set a time to meet and discuss the matter further, after which Zhao Tianjiao bowed deeply, then dispelled the sealing shield and walked away somberly.

Bai Xiaochun put all of the love letters away, and then strutted proudly back to his Dao protectors. Master God-Diviner seemed very curious, and although Song Que was feigning complete disinterest, it was obvious that he was paying close attention to Bai

Xiaochun.

After a moment, Master God-Diviner couldn't hold back from asking, "Junior Patriarch, what were you talking about over there with Zhao Tianjiao?"

"I can't say," Bai Xiaochun said, shaking his head in very enigmatic fashion. "It's a matter which touches on the most important thing in Elder Brother Zhao's life. How could I possibly reveal that information so casually?" Claspng his hands behind his back, he pompously strolled off toward his cabin.

Of course, his secrecy only caused Master God-Diviner and the others to grow more curious, and it was the same with everyone else who had been present to witness the scene. In fact, many people began making discreet inquiries to try to dig up information, although none of that produced any results.

Three days passed, during which time Bai Xiaochun never left his cabin. Instead, he waited patiently for Zhao Tianjiao to come consult with him.

Seeing this, Master God-Diviner couldn't help but ask about the situation a few more times, but each time, his inquiries were rebuffed. Finally, though, Bai Xiaochun sighed and said, "I'm waiting for someone."

"Zhao Tianjiao?" Master God-Diviner replied, shocked. Even Song Que's ears perked up.

"That's right," Bai Xiaochun replied calmly. "The truth is that the only person on this entire battleship who can help him is me, Bai Xiaochun." With that, he closed his eyes and continued to meditate, looking prouder of himself than ever.

Master God-Diviner and Song Que exchanged a quizzical glance. However, no amount of speculation on their part could provide any insight. Finally, when evening was falling on the third day, Zhao Tianjiao's voice could be heard outside the cabin door.

“Is Junior Brother Bai in?”

Master God-Diviner and Song Que looked over at Bai Xiaochun, who slowly opened his eyes.

“Que’er, hurry up and get the door. Manyao, please give us some privacy.”

Chen Manyao gave a light harrumph. She had her own speculations about what was going on, but had no choice but to glide over to her room and close the door. As for Song Que, his eyes widened to a glare, but he knew that he was a guest under someone else’s roof, so therefore he simply gritted his teeth and went to open the door.

As soon as the door opened, Zhao Tianjiao appeared, solemn as ever as he walked in with two followers.

The two followers had anxious expressions on their faces; they happened to be two of the chosen from the Hall of Devil Slayers that Bai Xiaochun had visited to ask for help buying medicinal ingredients. Back then, both of them had intentionally made things difficult for Bai Xiaochun. One of them had quoted an astronomical price, and the other had pretended to be in secluded meditation.

How could they ever have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would suddenly rise to the top in spectacular fashion, reaching the violet portion of the rainbow and shaking the entire sect? Of course, even after all of that, they had still felt confident that Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t come looking for revenge, not considering that they were followers of Zhao Tianjiao.

But now, it was to their complete disbelief that they learned that Zhao Tianjiao and Bai Xiaochun were somehow very close to each other. What was even more shocking was that Zhao Tianjiao had a very serious expression on his face, and was being very polite.

The two of them couldn’t help but be quite shaken.

Upon entering, Zhao Tianjiao took a deep breath and, completely ignoring the fact that Master God-Diviner and Song Que were still present, clasped hands and bowed deeply. “Junior Brother Bai, I hope you won’t laugh at me when I tell you that I’ve always been in love with Junior Sister Yueshan. I just don’t know how to win her over. In terms of compensation, I’ll give you anything you ask for, as long as it’s in my power. Even a deva beast soul!”

Chapter 450: Win Charm!

Master God-Diviner took a deep breath, and Song Que stood off to the side with a look of blank shock on his face. No matter how either of them had considered the matter, they could never have guessed that the preeminently proud Zhao Tianjiao would say something like that upon entering Bai Xiaochun's cabin.

They weren't the only ones to be completely taken aback: Zhao Tianjiao's two followers were also struck with shock.

That was especially true considering that the compensation Zhao Tianjiao was offering was a deva beast soul. All four of the other cultivators present were completely flabbergasted by that; back at the sect, a deva beast soul could be traded for a Nascent Soul Pill, which showed how incredibly valuable they were.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun sat there cross-legged, not even having bothered to rise to his feet. In fact, he was actually frowning in displeasure.

Then he snorted coldly, flicked his sleeve and angrily said, "Elder Brother Zhao, you and I got along with each other at first sight, and it was the sincerity of your request that convinced me to help you. And yet here you go and offer compensation? Do you really think that I, Bai Xiaochun, am the kind of person who cares about compensation from you?!"

Face turning even more grim, he continued, "Deva beast soul...? Hmph! If I want one of those, I'll get it myself. You may leave now, Elder Brother Zhao. See yourself out!"

Master God-Diviner and Song Que suddenly found it hard to breathe, and Zhao Tianjiao's two followers' jaws dropped. As for the latter, they had never heard anyone in the current generation of disciples speak to Zhao Tianjiao in such a way. Just as they were about to step forward and berate Bai Xiaochun, Zhao Tianjiao raised his hand to stop them.

Giving Bai Xiaochun a deep look, he suddenly smiled, which was something he very rarely did.

“How foolish of me, my brother. Please don’t be angry.”

The sincerity of his smile and his words caused the hearts of his two followers to begin to pound even harder. They had been followers of Zhao Tianjiao for a very long time, and had never once seen him smile. Not only was that shocking in and of itself, but it also made them even more terrified of Bai Xiaochun.

Laughing heartily, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet.

“Eldest Brother, the truth is that I’m just trying to get the best you have to offer. You see, the reason I want to help you is not because I want to make a quick profit, but rather, because I seek long-term compensation. And that compensation is none other than your friendship!” Bai Xiaochun was of the opinion that the words he had spoken were particularly impressive, and was feeling quite proud of himself for coming up with them.

Master God-Diviner and Song Que exchanged a glance, and even Zhao Tianjiao seemed surprised. But then, Zhao Tianjiao’s smile grew even more sincere than before. Shaking his head, he sat down in front of Bai Xiaochun.

“I’m in love with Chen Yueshan, Xiaochun. What am I supposed to do?”

Bai Xiaochun sat down, placing a flagon of spirit alcohol down between them as he did. Master God-Diviner, being as quick-witted as he was, quickly took it upon himself to serve them. Bai Xiaochun lifted his cup and took a sip, his eyes glittering faintly.

Zhao Tianjiao didn’t rush him. Taking a sip of his own alcohol, he sat there waiting for Bai Xiaochun to speak.

It took Bai Xiaochun a moment to organize his thoughts, after which, he began to speak, his expression placid, but seemingly profound, like someone who had long since achieved the Dao.

“Love is a complex and ever-changing thing, like an entire world of interlocking thoughts and emotions. It’s not common for people to be able to see thing clearly when it comes to love, especially considering how many things affect it. Consider: one’s personality, one’s actions, one’s status, and one’s other relationships all play a part, as well as sundry other factors.”

Placing his drinking vessel down, he slowly continued, “Loving someone is a simple thing. However, getting that person to love you back is a skill unto itself.

“Upon first entering the cultivation world, I did not shrink back from that tribulation called love, and in fact, dominated the field for decades. I received 37,931 love letters, and won the hearts of tens of thousands of young women. I’ve seen many instances of love, and seen many beautiful women age and fall by the wayside. Although I can’t say that I understand everything about the topic, based on what I’ve experienced, I can claim to have learned a bit.” Waving his sleeve, he stuck his chin up, and from the look in his eye, he seemed to have many profound thoughts running through his head.

Master God-Diviner’s eyes went even wider than before, and as for Song Que, his lips curled with a bit of scorn. The two of them exchanged a look, and both could see how much the other was scoffing at Bai Xiaochun’s blatant, showy display.

Zhao Tianjiao coughed dryly, and was about to say something when Bai Xiaochun suddenly gave him a piercing look.

“What I am about to explain now is a secret that took me half a lifetime to perfect. Anyone who masters this secret will have the power to shake heaven and earth, and even cause signs to appear in the sky. Were it to fall into the wrong hands, wicked hands, it would lead to countless young women being struck witless with terror, and likely, plunged into an abyss of misery.... Therefore, all of you must remember that this is a secret which cannot be spread beyond this room!

“The field of love is like the field of battle. In battle, you seek victory, and in love, you seek to win the heart of the person you love!

“Therefore, I, Bai Xiaochun, have taken everything I have learned in life, and combined it all into a single character. Win!” As he spoke, his voice grew louder, and seemed to surge with intensity.

“When you break apart the character win 赢 into all its smaller elements, you get 亡 death, 口 mouth, 月 moon, 贝 shell-money, 凡 and mortal!

“The death character represents an awareness of deadly crisis. The mouth character represents the power to communicate properly. The moon character represents how important timing and the environment are. The shell-money character represents how important spirit stones are. The mortal character represents how you must always keep your mortal heart calm and peaceful, especially in critical moments.”

Upon hearing these words, Zhao Tianjiao’s expression flickered.

He wasn’t the only one to react in such a way. Master God-Diviner couldn’t keep his expression calm, and Song Que’s mind began to spin with numerous thoughts. Even Zhao Tianjiao’s two followers gasped, as though they had just received important enlightenment.

Never before in their lives had they heard words spoken like this, and the more they thought about them... the more they made sense!

“This is the summary of all the insight of Love Saint Bai Xiaochun... my secret method, the Win Charm!” To emphasize his words, Bai Xiaochun slapped his hand down onto the ground, the sound of which echoed into the minds of everyone present, leaving them utterly shaken.

“This....” Master God-Diviner looked in shock at Bai Xiaochun, his mind filled with thoughts of the Win Charm.

Song Que was gaping in disbelief, trying to figure out how Bai Xiaochun could possibly have come up with something like this....

Zhao Tianjiao lost control of his breathing for a moment before calming down. As of this moment, he was completely convinced that Bai Xiaochun knew what he was talking about. He really was like a deva, and his Win Charm left Zhao Tianjiao feeling as if he had been struck by lightning. Suddenly, whole new worlds of possibility had opened up.

“This guy took the battlefield that is love,” he thought, “and all the techniques and skills involved with it, and bound them together into a single character.... Just how profoundly skilled is he?” Zhao Tianjiao couldn’t stop from rising to his feet, clasping hands, and bowing deeply to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked completely and utterly calm. Furthermore, at some unknown point, he had produced a fan, which he slowly swished through the air as he gazed around with an enigmatic smile on his face.

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t come up with the Win Charm on his own. He had received quite a bit of help from imposter Nightcrypt. After all, back in the Blood Stream Sect, imposter Nightcrypt had gained a lot of experience in the love department.... Although all of his experiences had left him shedding proverbial tears of blood, were it not for his special techniques, neither he nor anyone else in his position could ever have accomplished what he had.

A profound look appeared in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes as he slowly said, “The Win Charm is just an overview, which I have explained to you today so that you can understand how the field of love is just like the field of battle!

“And now, I will give a more detailed explanation of the essence

of the Win Charm!

“Death, mouth, moon, shell-money, mortal. The first aspect is the death character, which represents an awareness of deadly crisis. You must be prepared for dangerous threats at any moment, and must always remind yourself that a crisis might be around the next corner!

“After all, Elder Sister Chen is a natural born beauty with spectacular latent talent. You can’t just simply think of her as a young woman with no Daoist partner. Obviously, there are many, many other disciples in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect who secretly have a crush on her, so many that you have no way of knowing how many there are!

“In fact, forget about the sect as a whole. Even on this very ship, there are surely many disciples who are already in love with her, so if you ignore that sensation of crisis now, then you have already met defeat!” To Zhao Tianjiao, Bai Xiaochun’s words felt like a fist punching him in the face. Moments ago, he had felt as if he suddenly understood things more, but now he was left shaking in fear. The truth was that he truly did care about Chen Yueshan, but because of his personality, found it impossible to express himself directly. He didn’t even know how to try to woo her. Therefore, when he had seen how easily Bai Xiaochun seemed to handle women, he had come to him for advice.

First, he had been shaken by Bai Xiaochun’s love letters, and then came the shocking Win Charm. By now, he had complete and utter faith, and couldn’t wait to hear what was coming next.

“So, what am I supposed to do?!?!” he asked anxiously.

“Calm down,” Bai Xiaochun said sincerely, “I’m not finished yet. Although you must always foster that sense of crisis, you mustn’t let it show on your face. Keep it alive in your heart only. That way... you will always understand that time is limited!”

Zhao Tianjiao took a deep breath to calm himself down.

Seeing that, Bai Xiaochun's eyes twinkled with approval. Nodding his head, he continued, "Very good. Now, let's move on to the mouth character, which represents communication and interaction. You say you love Elder Sister Chen, therefore, I won't even wait for your response to the next issue. Have you told her about your feelings, or done anything to act on them? Obviously not, and that's fine. You don't want to be too hasty about such matters. However, you need to find more opportunities to interact with her, and when you do, you must be charming and witty. That's very important. And don't worry about what exactly to say. I'll teach you everything."

Chapter 451: Love Saint Bai Xiaochun

“I....” Zhao Tianjiao began nervously, but couldn’t even figure out what to say after that. After hearing everything that Bai Xiaochun had said so far, his heart was already filled with profound gratitude.

“Next,” Bai Xiaochun continued, “is the moon character, which represents timing and environment. We’re all on a ship right now, and the two of you are staying on the same deck. That means you have the advantage in terms of location. With me on your side, you’ll definitely succeed!” He emphasized his last words by clapping his hands together loudly, then raising his voice and continuing, “Next is the shell-money character, which I don’t think we even need to discuss. You surely have plenty of spirit stones. Last is the mortal character, which is very important, and is the antithesis of the death character. You see, despite embracing a sense of crisis within you, you must also have a calm heart. You must not let yourself get flustered; you have to keep control. And remember, as we proceed, I’ll take care of everything!”

His voice seemed to thrum with encouragement and power, causing Zhao Tianjiao’s blood to pump harder, and his mood to soar.

As for Master God-Diviner and the others present, when they heard Bai Xiaochun’s more detailed explanation, they started to get even more excited, and began to pay more close attention than ever. After all, they could tell that what Bai Xiaochun was saying could probably help them as well.

Only Song Que still felt a bit of derision, although even he couldn’t quite tear himself away from listening.

Coughing dryly, Bai Xiaochun said, “Don’t get excited yet, I haven’t finished speaking.”

Zhao Tianjiao personally refilled Bai Xiaochun’s drinking vessel,

after which Bai Xiaochun took a sip of alcohol to wet his throat. Then he continued, “My explanation of the Win Charm was mostly so that you could understand why Love Saint Bai Xiaochun was able to dominate the field of love for decades. At this point, we need to start talking specifics.

“You see, on the field of love, you have to know yourself, and know your enemy. Furthermore, you have to be willing to adapt. If you want to get her to fall in love with you, you first have to get on the good side of her friends and family. If they think you’re a good person, then you’ll be a good person to her, even if you really aren’t!” Bai Xiaochun spoke with complete and utter confidence, making his words utterly convincing.

Master God-Diviner suddenly slapped his thigh, and his eyes sparkled with bright light. Sitting up straight and tall, he looked at Bai Xiaochun with an expression of reverence; clearly, he took Bai Xiaochun’s words to be like gospel at this point.

Bai Xiaochun, however, seemed a bit annoyed at the interruption. Looking askance at Master God-Diviner for a moment, he continued, “There is a fact of which you might not be aware. When it comes to female cultivators, many of them lack a sense of security, something which is compounded by the brutal nature of the cultivation world. If you can give a girl a sense of security, then you will be like a beam of light on a dark night. She will naturally be drawn to you. Once you succeed in that, then you will have taken your first step toward success....” In response to these words, Zhao Tianjiao’s eyebrows shot up with excitement.

Apparently, Master God-Diviner was worried he might forget what he was hearing, and had pulled out a jade slip to inscribe the information permanently. As for Zhao Tianjiao’s two followers, they were staring at Bai Xiaochun with looks of awe and reverence.

“There are two important techniques you must master. Put simply, they are both ways to get her attracted to you! After you acquire her attention, you need to do as the line from the ancient

poem says: hold a lute in your arms and use it to cover your face. In other words, make yourself seem mysterious! When she approaches you, back off! When she backs away, get closer to her! After a number of such back-and-forth encounters, she will eventually be filled with unquenchable desire! And that, heh heh, is when you will finally have hooked her!” Even Bai Xiaochun was getting excited by this point, and was waving his arms in dramatic gestures as he spoke.

“That is how to conceal the fact that you are pursuing her, and actually make it seem like she’s the one pursuing you!

“Back in the Blood Stream Sect, I used this exact method to win the heart of Que’er’s aunt.”

Song Que’s expression grew even darker, and all of a sudden, it made complete sense why his aunt, who had never been one to be attracted to the immature type, fell head over heels for Bai Xiaochun....

Although Song Que felt like simply walking out of the room, he had to admit that much of what Bai Xiaochun was saying could be useful in the future. Therefore, he quickly came up with an excuse to stay behind. “I’m definitely going to make sure my aunt knows the truth about this Bai Xiaochun!” he thought.

Zhao Tianjiao was completely shaken. Given the expression on Song Que’s face, it was obvious that Bai Xiaochun wasn’t lying. Therefore, Zhao Tianjiao’s confidence only continued to grow.

“At that point, though, you will not have secured your win on the field of love. Your position will still be very precarious, and you will have to work hard to consolidate your standing.” Bai Xiaochun felt extremely proud of himself at how shaken everyone was by his words. The truth was that during the past three days, he had spent a lot of time discussing the matter with imposter Nightcrypt, and had himself been quite shaken by what he had heard.

“I understand!” Zhao Tianjiao said excitedly. “I get what you

mean by consolidating my standing. It's like cultivation. After you make a breakthrough, you have to stabilize your cultivation base. I get it!"

"No, you don't get it!" Bai Xiaochun barked, glaring. "What you get is how to build upon existing feelings. That's not what I'm talking about. The highest realm in this aspect of love is being able to keep your distance! You need to get her worked up emotionally, to give her the feeling that she could lose you at any moment. That's when you finally make your move!"

"You absolutely, positively must not spend too much time with her during this phase. If you do, she'll be too complacent regarding the growing feelings between the two of you. You must make her treasure such feelings! You must make her hell-bent on being with you. Remember, the easier something is to get, the less precious it will be in the end." Suddenly, Bai Xiaochun lapsed into silence, an expression of reminiscence and longing appeared on his face, as though he were lost in his memories of love, and the bittersweet recollections of an immature youth.

The truth was that he was actually thinking back to what he and imposter Nightcrypt had discussed, reviewing what came next in the speech, and mentally rehearsing how to say it. After enough time passed for two incense sticks to burn, his thoughts were in order.

Of course, during that time, Zhao Tianjiao was on the verge of prostrating himself in admiration, and was convinced that Bai Xiaochun must abound with countless stories regarding love and relationships.

In any other circumstance, there was no way that Zhao Tianjiao, with his level of experience in life, would be so easily swayed. But the truth was that his heart was completely wrapped up with thoughts of Chen Yueshan. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun's words left him totally shaken, and the way Bai Xiaochun was explaining things left him utterly bereft of any powers of judgement....

Eyes still flickering with the gleam of reminiscence, Bai Xiaochun began to speak in a voice so soft it seemed that he had forgotten about Zhao Tianjiao's presence. "You have to take your time. Make it seem like you are slowly coming to accept her....

"Then, when the moment is right, you give her the surprise of her life. Make her feel that the only reasonable decision is to become your Daoist partner. Up to that point, she will have been stewing in nervousness over the prospect of losing you, only to be suddenly overwhelmed with joy. When that happens for you, Elder Brother Zhao, I will finally be able to offer my congratulations to you for succeeding!"

At this point, he seemed to have fully emerged from his memories of the past, and looked over at Zhao Tianjiao. Raising his voice, he said, "However, I have to warn you, Elder Brother Zhao, relationships are not easy, and since you are going at it with a long and complicated plan, you must promise to never cast your loved one away. If you do, you will surely be punished by the heavens!" By this point, Bai Xiaochun's words were spoken so loudly that they were almost deafening. Zhao Tianjiao was completely shaken, and immediately jumped to clasp hands and bow deeply.

Expression serious, and eyes shining with determination, he spoke in the most decisive of decisive voices, "I, Zhao Tianjiao, hereby solemnly swear that if I can tie the knot with Junior Sister Yueshan, then she will be my only Daoist partner for my entire life! If I break my oath, may the heavens destroy me and the earth bury me!"

"Good!" Bai Xiaochun said, nodding approvingly like a member of the Senior generation. "Since that's the case, then it's not in vain that I, Love Saint Bai Xiaochun, have explained my secrets to you!" Then he looked over at Master God-Diviner, Song Que, and Zhao Tianjiao's two followers. "The same goes for the rest of you too!"

Master God-Diviner didn't hesitate for a moment to swear a

similar oath. As for Song Que, when Bai Xiaochun looked directly at him, he felt a bit guilty, and almost swore an oath, but finally just snorted and refused to speak.

As for Zhao Tianjiao's two followers, they were completely shaken, and didn't even think twice about swearing oaths.

Bai Xiaochun nodded in satisfaction. After taking another sip of alcohol, he looked at the fervent Zhao Tianjiao, then smiled and stuck his chin up.

"Very well, the formalities having been dispensed with, the time has come for you to go ingratiate yourself with Elder Sister Yueshan's close friends and family."

"Wait," Zhao Tianjiao said miserably, "I can't do that! Junior Sister Yueshan only has two good friends, and both of them left for the Wildlands years ago. Furthermore, in terms of her family, her father is my Master, and he's very strict. How can I ingratiate myself with him?"

"Your master is old three-eyes?" Bai Xiaochun said, his jaw dropping.

Zhao Tianjiao cleared his throat, and was thinking of correcting the way Bai Xiaochun referred to his Master, but considering that he was here asking for help, he pretended that he hadn't noticed.

Bai Xiaochun's heart suddenly surged as he realized that if he could get Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan together, then it would essentially mean that he would have a deva on his side. He immediately began to consider more ways to handle Zhao Tianjiao's situation.

After a moment, his eyes began to sparkle.

"Very well, let's shift tactics. You need to get Elder Sister Yueshan's attention. Therefore, we need to know what type of man she likes."

"I'm not sure!" Zhao Tianjiao said, looking even more miserable

than before.

“Don’t worry. I’ll take care of everything. The easiest way to get an idea about someone’s personality is to look at the clothing they wear. How about this: you leave it to me to pick what clothes to wear over the next few days. It shouldn’t take long to figure out what she likes.” As Bai Xiaochun imagined all the different clothing he would have Zhao Tianjiao wear, he couldn’t help but muse that this was the perfect plan. With that, he pulled Zhao Tianjiao closer and began to whisper into his ear the details of which outfits he should get ready.

Zhao Tianjiao’s expression flickered. His eyes went wide, he hissed, he gasped, and soon, a bitter expression appeared on his face.

“Do we really have to do it that way?”

“Yes, absolutely! Pay attention to her reaction. If she frowns, or simply looks away, it means she doesn’t like that outfit. If she looks more closely, it means she’s interested. Either way, you need to keep me informed immediately of all developments.”

Zhao Tianjiao seemed to be vacillating, leading Master God-Diviner and the others to wonder exactly what outfits Bai Xiaochun wanted Zhao Tianjiao to wear.

But finally, Zhao Tianjiao decided to throw caution to the wind. Gritting his teeth, he nodded and said, “I’ll do whatever you say!”

Chapter 452: Infinitely Changeable Chosen

Teeth gritted and eyes bloodshot, Zhao Tianjiao said, “Tomorrow. Tomorrow morning, I’ll go through with your plan!”

Heart swelling with determination, he gave Bai Xiaochun a deep bow of thanks, and then turned and left.

His two followers exchanged awkward glances, then bowed to Bai Xiaochun and hurried to follow Zhao Tianjiao back to deck 2.

After Zhao Tianjiao and his followers left, Master God-Diviner rose to his feet and looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a look of complete reverence, having been completely overwhelmed by Bai Xiaochun’s mastery of the ways of love.

As the expression goes, listening to the words of a wise man can be superior to ten years of studying from books, and that was exactly how Master God-Diviner felt now. If he could master Bai Xiaochun’s consummate techniques, then after he got back to the River-Defying Sect, he would have the power to rebuke the heavens and rise to the pinnacle of all creation.

Such thoughts left Master God-Diviner completely excited, and he immediately stepped forward to refill Bai Xiaochun’s drinking vessel with alcohol.

“Junior Patriarch, you must be tired from all that speaking, please quench your parched throat.”

Chin tilting up, Bai Xiaochun looked at Master God-Diviner, and felt quite pleased to see how subserviently he was acting. Taking a drink of alcohol, he nodded approvingly.

At first, Master God-Diviner was a bit taken aback, but he quickly recovered and said, “Junior Patriarch, your shoulders must be tired. Come, come, allow me to massage them.”

With that, he hurried over and began to knead Bai Xiaochun’s shoulders.

“Junior Patriarch,” he continued politely, “if you want it softer or harder, just say the word.”

Feeling extremely pleased with himself, Bai Xiaochun laughed loudly and continued to fan himself. As far as he was concerned, he really was incredible; by consolidating and then revealing all of imposter Nightcrypt’s skills and knowledge, he had left everyone completely flabbergasted.

Song Que couldn’t take this scene anymore, although secretly, he was quite shaken. He would never deign to reveal that fact to Bai Xiaochun though. Snorting lightly, he rose to his feet to leave when, all of a sudden, Master God-Diviner asked a very interesting question.

“Junior Patriarch, I’m very curious about the advice you gave to Zhao Tianjiao a moment ago. What kind of clothes did you tell him to wear?”

Bai Xiaochun straightened out his sleeve and replied, “Oh, you want to know that?”

At this point, Master God-Diviner decided to go all-in with the flattery. “Junior patriarch, you are consummately wise, intelligent, and courageous. I know that I’m not smart enough to hide my curiosity from you, sir, so I figured I might as well ask directly.”

Bai Xiaochun simply couldn’t cover up how proud he was of himself. Laughing, he continued, “Well, that’s true. I’m Love Saint Bai Xiaochun! I dominated the field of love for decades! What is there that I haven’t seen!?”

“Ah, whatever. You can’t to go up to deck 2 to see for yourselves tomorrow; that would interfere with the plan anyway.” With that, Bai Xiaochun slapped his bag of holding and produced his copper mirror. “Que’er, why don’t you deliver this mirror over to Elder Brother Zhao. Tell him to keep it on his person so that we can see what’s happening, and I can give him instructions as needed.”

Song Que hesitated, but caught the mirror as Bai Xiaochun tossed it over. Although he was inclined to refuse, he was also curious about the plan with Zhao Tianjiao, and therefore, gritted his teeth and left to deliver the mirror.

Nothing happened during the night. The following morning, Bai Xiaochun, Master God-Diviner, Song Que and Chen Manyao were all gathered around a jade slip, which emanated a soft light above it in the form of a screen. The images on the screen were very clear, and revealed a room that was vastly larger and more luxurious than Bai Xiaochun's.

In addition to the room, Zhao Tianjiao was there, although only his face was visible at the moment.

He was frowning, apparently vacillating about what to do, and also clearly aware that Bai Xiaochun could see him. Finally, after a long moment of hesitation, he gritted his teeth and said, "This is all for the sake of Junior Sister Yueshan. I'm... I'm gonna put everything on the line!"

Zhao Tianjiao took a moment to gather his focus, and then, without any hesitation, performed an incantation gesture with his right hand. Instantly, a field of mist appeared around him, from within which could be heard loud rustling sounds.

Since Bai Xiaochun and the others were observing through the copper mirror, it was impossible to see through that mist unless they used some special techniques. Considering that, Master God-Diviner, Song Que, and Chen Manyao were all extremely curious about what was happening.

Soon, the rustling sounds faded away, but the mist remained in place. Apparently, Zhao Tianjiao wasn't willing to emerge from inside. Time passed. A lot of time. Finally, Zhao Tianjiao's eyes could be seen from within the mist, shining as brightly as stars.

"Xiaochun, you can hear me, right?" he said, his voice quavering a bit. "Based on my observations, every day at about this time,

Junior Sister Yueshan emerges from her cabin. Therefore, I'm going to do just as you asked. I'm going to walk out and make sure... that she sees me." Zhao Tianjiao seemed very nervous, so nervous in fact that even having a higher cultivation base wouldn't have enabled him to control it. And yet, in addition to that nervousness, there was also a hint of excitement.

A moment later, Zhao Tianjiao's eyes narrowed, and then the mist began to vanish, and he strode toward the door.

By the time the door opened, the mist had vanished, revealing a sight... that left Master God-Diviner, Song Que, and Chen Manyao's eyes as wide as saucers.

He was wearing a pink outfit, including pink trousers, a pink hat, and pink robes.... Everything was pink.... Even his face seemed pink, although that was likely from embarrassment. Most noteworthy of all was that he held a pink, feathered fan in his hand....

Zhao Tianjiao looked absolutely nothing like he usually did. Usually, he was cool and aloof, a higher being of sorts, a person with no expression on his wooden, ice-cold face!

But now, he was completely pink, almost as if he were trying to be flirtatious. It was a shocking transformation, and even Bai Xiaochun, who had come up with this idea to begin with, felt like his mind was being struck by lightning.

As all the observers reeled in shock, Zhao Tianjiao gritted his teeth and, according to the plan put in place, he strode out the door with a coquettish look on his face. He fanned himself slowly, his eyes narrowed, and even went so far as to pull out a pink flower and bite it between his teeth. As he strolled in the direction of Chen Yueshan's cabin, he looked like the picture of an important government official on his way to take some liberties with women.

"Th-that's... that's really Elder Brother Zhao?" Master God-Diviner stammered. Song Que was just as shaken, and Chen

Manyao's eyes were wide with shock.

It was in that very moment that the door of Chen Yueshan's cabin opened, and she walked out into the open. She stood tall and straight, clad in a green robe, apparently having just bathed. There were even a few beads of moisture on her neck that made her look as beautiful as a water lily. Although it wouldn't be correct to call her one of the most beautiful women in existence, she was definitely the type to catch the attention of any male.

Apparently, she was on her way to the deck to enjoy the sea breeze, but even as she slowly pushed open the door to her cabin, her eyes fell upon Zhao Tianjiao.

In that instant, her eyes went so wide they became completely round. Her jaw dropped, and she forgot to keep pushing the door open. As for Zhao Tianjiao, he was so nervous that he couldn't think of anything to say, and before he could think of what to do, Chen Yueshan recovered her senses. Eyes going blank, she stepped back into her cabin and slammed the door shut.

The slamming of the door struck Zhao Tianjiao senseless for a moment, and the flower even fell out of his mouth. Then, he hurried back into his own cabin and pulled out the copper mirror.

"Well, how did it go, Xiaochun?" he said. "I... I feel like things were a bit off...." As of this moment, the crestfallen Zhao Tianjiao didn't seem at all like the Eldest Brother of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Instead, he seemed more like a confused teenager.

"Stand firm, Elder Brother Zhao!" Bai Xiaochun said solemnly, projecting his words through the copper mirror to Zhao Tianjiao. "Did you forget what I said to you about keeping your mortal heart calm? I saw everything that happened just now. Elder Sister Yueshan's reaction was completely normal. Don't worry at all. We just need to keep doing things as planned."

Bai Xiaochun seemed to be struggling to sound confident, but Zhao Tianjiao didn't notice. After hearing Bai Xiaochun's words,

he steeled himself, took a deep breath, and nodded solemnly.

“I’ll do whatever you say!”

“Trust me,” Bai Xiaochun said, slapping his chest, “what happened just now is no problem at all.”

The truth was he was feeling a bit guilty about what had happened, but did his best to sound encouraging. Gritting his teeth, he became more determined than ever to help his Elder Brother Zhao win over the beautiful Chen Yueshan.

The following morning at dawn....

Zhao Tianjiao paced back and forth in his room, building up his courage. When he was ready, he swished his sleeve and summoned the mist. When he pushed open the door and dispelled the mist, he was wearing a completely different set of clothing....

Chapter 453: I'll Do Whatever You Say, Xiaochun!

In the same moment that Zhao Tianjiao walked out of his room, Chen Yueshan's door opened and she slowly walked out, dressed exactly the same as she had been the day before.

Even as she walked out, she subconsciously turned to look at Zhao Tianjiao....

Today, Zhao Tianjiao wasn't wearing pink. This time, he wore a long white robe and a scholar's hat, making him look completely different than before.

He seemed refined and learned, a man of erudite knowledge, righteous instead of cold, and even smiling broadly. The smile was a bit stiff, but compared to his usual self, he seemed much warmer.

Most astonishing of all were the deep emotions which swirled in his eyes, emotions that Zhao Tianjiao didn't need any help from Bai Xiaochun to put on display.

As he stood there outside of the door of his cabin, he looked like the picture of a young scholar preparing to go take the imperial examinations. As soon as Chen Yueshan looked over, she saw him, and their gazes met.

At that point, Chen Yueshan's jaw dropped, and she gasped. Without even thinking about it, she took a few steps back, and appeared to be on the verge of hurrying away down the corridor. However, the strangeness of the situation caused her to turn and walk back into her cabin, after which the door slammed shut behind her.

Doing his best to control his nervous breathing, Zhao Tianjiao hurried back into his own cabin. He seemed to be a lot less flustered than the day before, though, and was continuously reminding himself to remain calm.

“She doesn’t like playboys and doesn’t like scholars. Xiaochun was right. I really need to try out multiple angles here....”

On the third morning when Chen Yueshan walked out, she couldn’t help but look over in the direction of Zhao Tianjiao’s cabin, whereupon she instantly caught sight of him standing there....

This time, he was wearing a full suit of armor, with a greatsword strapped to his back. The way he bristled with a murderous aura made him seem like a matchless hero, a general ready to charge into the thick of battle.

Yet again, Chen Yueshan was completely taken aback. However, instead of being confused, she was more curious about what was happening, and even thought about asking Zhao Tianjiao what was going on. However, the strangeness of the situation made her a bit embarrassed to do that, and after a moment of hesitation, she went back into her room.

“Keep up the good work, Elder Brother Zhao!” Bai Xiaochun said excitedly via voice transmission. “You’ll succeed in no time. It seems that Elder Sister Yueshan has abandoned any plans to go up to the deck. That indicates that you’ve attracted her attention!”

Zhao Tianjiao was also getting excited, as he could sense that things were already a bit different between him and Chen Yueshan. Feeling more confident in Bai Xiaochun than ever, he hurried to prepare the following morning’s attire.

On the fourth day, Chen Yueshan hesitated in her cabin before finally deciding to go outside at the same time she usually did. This time when she opened the door, it wasn’t with the intention of going to the main deck, but rather, to see what crazy antics Zhao Tianjiao would get up to.

As soon as she emerged, she didn’t even have a chance to look over at his cabin before she realized that the corridor was filled with the dazzling twinkle and glow of pearls and gold. Today, Zhao

Tianjiao looked like the epitome of a rich and powerful person.

He was festooned with countless spirit pearls and other treasures, including at least three rings of holding on every finger on both of his hands, for a total of more than thirty. His forearms were also completely filled with bracelets of holding.

He seemed proud and arrogant, as if he were the richest person in all the world. As soon as Chen Yueshan saw him like this, her eyes went wide, and she was convinced that something was wrong with Zhao Tianjiao.

Frowning, she hurried back into her room, her eyes sparkling a bit, and her heart pounding for some unknown reason as she thought back on the events of the past few days.

Crestfallen, Zhao Tianjiao paced back and forth in his room. "I'm finished, Xiaochun. Finished! I told you that Junior Sister Yueshan wasn't so lowbrow. I... I should never have dressed up like that."

"Calm down," Bai Xiaochun said sternly. "We want to give Chen Yueshan just enough rope to hang herself with. Only by dressing up in this fashion could you provide the perfect foil for tomorrow, and leave her truly shaken. Don't worry, I've already decided what you're going to wear. It's time to pull out our trump card!!"

"Trump card?" Shivering, Zhao Tianjiao looked at the copper mirror, his eyes shining brightly.

"That's right. After the past few days of observation, I, Love Saint Bai Xiaochun, can draw upon my decades of experience to see through all of Elder Sister Yueshan's defenses!" With that, he laughed loudly. However, inside, his confidence was beginning to waver a bit. So far, the plan had not quite gone as he had expected.

Based on his original assumptions, it should have only taken four days of dressing up to identify what Chen Yueshan liked. However, as of this moment, she was completely unreadable.

"It almost seems like she likes all of them, and at the same time,

none of them....” After some more thought, he was convinced that it was time to deal the finishing blow.

The night passed quickly. Zhao Tianjiao was too nervous to do any meditation, and kept pacing around, thumping himself on the chest. When the appointed time came, he rushed out of his cabin under the careful observation of Bai Xiaochun and his Dao protectors.

Outside, he stamped his foot down and then began to remove his clothing.

One piece at a time fell to the ground until he was almost completely unclothed, revealing his strong, muscular body. He even pulled out a vial of medicinal oil that Bai Xiaochun had provided and spread it out on his skin, making him look even more athletic than before, as if he were on the verge of unleashing explosive and shocking power.

He had an almost perfect physique, with tight muscles bulging out everywhere, making him almost like the ultimate representation of manly attractiveness....

This was the trump card that Bai Xiaochun had prepared for Zhao Tianjiao!

Zhao Tianjiao wasn't quite thinking straight at the moment, otherwise he would never have agreed to do something like this. However, he had already followed the plan up to this point, so there was no going back now. He could only grit his teeth as he placed all of his hopes on Bai Xiaochun's plan.

He even began to practice a few poses that Bai Xiaochun had taught him.

Chen Yueshan's door opened, and she cautiously stepped outside, looking slightly scared. Then she looked over in the direction of Zhao Tianjiao's cabin, and saw him standing there bare-chested, shifting from one pose to another. At that point, her mind began to

spin as she was shaken to the core.

After seeing all of Zhao Tianjiao's strange transformations over the past few days, Chen Yueshan finally couldn't hold back anymore. Overwhelmed by curiosity, she finally said, "Elder... Elder Brother Zhao, what... what are you doing...?"

To hear her speak was almost too much for Zhao Tianjiao to take. Thankfully, he had been practicing remaining calm, and thus, he stuck to the plan. Maintaining the pose he had just struck, he turned his head and looked deeply into Chen Yueshan's eyes.

His eyes burned in a way that caused her heart to begin to pound, and suddenly, a flush spread out over her face. Seemingly flustered, she suddenly rushed back into her cabin.

When Zhao Tianjiao saw that, he got so excited he couldn't control himself anymore.

"I did it, Xiaochun! Hahaha! Did you see that? Not only did she talk to me, but she actually looked me up and down a few times! And she blushed!"

Back in his own cabin, Bai Xiaochun slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "Now that's more like it! This indicates that Elder Sister Yueshan likes it when you look strong and enticing!"

He couldn't be more excited that the plan he had designed and executed had finally made some major progress.

Moments later, Zhao Tianjiao was back in his cabin, pacing back and forth in excitement, his eyes shining brightly. "How could I have never noticed that Junior Sister Yueshan liked me when I looked like that? You're awesome, Xiaochun! Hahaha!"

"Yeah, I know," Bai Xiaochun said. "Like I said, this was a trump card designed by Love Saint Bai Xiaochun!" Clearing his throat, he continued in a stern tone, "However, it's too early to get excited. This is only the first step. You've got Elder Sister Yueshan's full attention, but now we need to solidify things. We need to make

sure that she gets even more attracted to you than ever, and that your face is burned indelibly into her heart!”

Zhao Tianjiao immediately nodded. Looking very serious, he said, “What do you want me to do?!”

Bai Xiaochun rubbed the bridge of his nose as he sat there in thought. After a long moment, he looked up, and his eyes were shining even more brightly than before.

“Elder Brother Zhao, we can’t delay our next move. We get to work tomorrow....

“It’s been a few days since Elder Sister Yueshan has gone up to the main deck. If she doesn’t see you out in the corridor tomorrow, then she’ll probably go outside. Therefore, you need to be there waiting for her, in a place where there are a lot of waves crashing against the side of the ship!

“Remember, you need to wear some really thin clothes! Once Elder Sister Yueshan appears, make sure some of the Heavenspan Sea waves splash on you and soak your clothes. That way, your strong, muscular body will again be completely revealed to Elder Sister Yueshan. That will make her even more attracted to you than ever!” Master God-Diviner, Song Que, and Chen Manyao all stood off to the side, strange expression on their faces as they listened in on the conversation.

After a moment of silence, Zhao Tianjiao said, “I’ll do whatever you say, Xiaochun!”

Chapter 454: Don't Worry, I'll Take Care Of Everything

Early the next morning, Bai Xiaochun rushed up to the main deck. The past few days, he had become completely wrapped up in helping Zhao Tianjiao pursue Chen Yueshan.

He took great pleasure in the sense of accomplishment it gave him, and as for his Dao protectors, they were also part of the whole effort, so it was with no little curiosity that they also headed up to the deck to see how events would play out.

It was early in the morning, and was somewhat of a stormy day. Great golden waves would occasionally slam into the ship, sending golden water spraying onto the deck.

Heavenspan Sea water could be very dangerous to ordinary cultivators, but top Chosen could endure it for quite some time.

Superstars such as Zhao Tianjiao wouldn't be harmed in any short period of time. A bit of water splashing on someone like him wouldn't corrode his skin at all, and he wouldn't truly be harmed unless he was submerged in the water itself.

Time ticked by, and soon it was noon. As Bai Xiaochun waited, the wind and the waves began to die down. Not a cloud could be seen in the sky.

Bai Xiaochun was just starting to get nervous, and was even thinking of changing his plan, when Zhao Tianjiao finally appeared. He looked over at Bai Xiaochun and smiled, but then put a serious expression on as he strode confidently toward a place on the deck where the waves splashed especially vigorously. Standing there, he looked back in the direction of deck 2.

Just when Bai Xiaochun was about to transmit some reminders to Zhao Tianjiao, Chen Yueshan appeared on deck 2, strolling along, a slight frown on her face. Apparently, she was a bit

disappointed at not having seen Zhao Tianjiao out in the corridor like she usually did.

As soon as she emerged into the open and headed to the main deck, she saw Zhao Tianjiao standing there at the prow of the ship, his eyes burning with passion. Instantly, their gazes locked.

By this point, even Bai Xiaochun could see that there was something different between Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan.

“Don’t miss this opportunity!!” he murmured, feeling shaken. If Zhao Tianjiao didn’t strike while the iron was hot, then all of their work so far would have been a waste. They might be able to continue on with other plans in the future, but they would never be able to recover their original momentum. Worst of all was that because of the sudden calm in the wind and the waves, there was no ocean spread, which caused Bai Xiaochun’s heart to begin to pound with anxiety.

He wasn’t the only nervous one. Zhao Tianjiao’s anxiety was also mounting.

Seeing that the opportunity was about to slip through their fingers, Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and then drew upon the full cultivation base power of his Gold Core, as well as his Undying Live Forever Technique and blood qi, to summon an enormous blood sword!

Simultaneously, he sprang into motion, shooting toward Zhao Tianjiao at high speed. Even as he flew through the air, the blood sword materialized, and he grabbed it, swinging toward the water outside of the ship.

“Don’t even think of trying to escape, you weird old fish!”

His blood sword screamed through the air, piercing into the sea water and, backed by the full force of Bai Xiaochun’s power, causing a huge wave to swell up.

As the wave smashed into the side of the ship, it turned into

countless droplets, some of which splashed onto Bai Xiaochun, while the others drenched Zhao Tianjiao.

Zhao Tianjiao had already been wearing somewhat thin garments, and now that they were soaked with sea water, they became almost completely translucent. Furthermore, they stuck to his skin, revealing his perfect physique and bulging muscles to everyone gathered on the deck.

The glittering sunlight which fell from above made Zhao Tianjiao look almost like he was made from gold. The shocking sight was made even more unique because of the fact that Bai Xiaochun had also been soaked.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit thin, but handsome, and considering that the sun was also shining down on him, it made him look like an immortal. As he turned his head, his hair swung through the air, making him look completely beyond the ordinary.

Although he and Zhao Tianjiao looked completely different, both of them were the type that numerous female cultivators would swoon over, and in fact, all such young women on deck were staring at them.

Chen Yueshan's heart began to pound as she looked Zhao Tianjiao up and down, her face flushing. Some of the other cultivators present were looking at Bai Xiaochun, curiosity rising up in their hearts.

Not only did Bai Xiaochun look almost otherworldly, but the fact that an attack backed by his late Core Formation cultivation base was powerful enough to cause waves to rise up on the surface of the Heavenspan Sea showed what incredible battle prowess he possessed.

Suddenly, people recalled the fight between Bai Xiaochun and the statue of Gongsun Wan'er, and thoughtful expressions appeared on their faces.

Excitement surged in Zhao Tianjiao's heart as he saw Chen Yueshan looking at him, and noticed the flush on her cheeks. Before meeting Bai Xiaochun, nothing like this had ever happened before, and at the moment, he was filled with such boundless gratitude that he felt as if he had no choice but to give voice to it. However, that was when Bai Xiaochun grabbed him.

"You need to quit while you're ahead," hissed. "Did you forget what I told you before? Don't get impatient!"

Zhao Tianjiao nodded, and the two of them quickly turned to leave. Many eyes followed them as they walked away, and numerous hearts were shaken at the realization that Bai Xiaochun and Zhao Tianjiao seemed to be quite close with each other.

"Lots of people want to be friends with Elder Brother Zhao, but he's too lofty. You just can't get close to him. How did Bai Xiaochun do it?!"

"Plus, you can tell from the look on his face that Elder Brother Zhao really trusts Bai Xiaochun...."

Even as murmured conversations broke out, Bai Xiaochun dragged Zhao Tianjiao back to his cabin. After changing clothes, they sat down across from each other to confer. Zhao Tianjiao was bursting with excitement; the events of the past few days had been too special and important for him to maintain his calm.

"Xiaochun, as of this point I'm absolutely sure that Junior Sister Yueshan is attracted to me, and not just perfunctorily either. So, what's the next step?" The look in his eye as he faced Bai Xiaochun was one of utter sincerity and anticipation.

"Don't worry," Bai Xiaochun said with a confident smile, "I'll take care of everything." Then his expression turned somber. "Getting her attracted to you is just the first step. We'll definitely get her to fall in love with you as well. However, don't get overconfident! A good start doesn't necessarily guarantee the perfect outcome. There are a lot of important things left to do, and

you have a long way to go to reach your goal. Are you ready for that, Elder Brother Zhao?!”

“I’ll do whatever you say, Xiaochun!” Zhao Tianjiao said, looking equally as somber.

Bai Xiaochun nodded in satisfaction.

“Remember what I said about a sense of security? That’s the most important thing to think about right now. You have to make sure that you give Elder Sister Yueshan that sense of security. When she is in danger, you have to thrust yourself in harm’s way, perhaps even being injured, to keep her safe.”

Zhao Tianjiao frowned thoughtfully “A sense of security? Considering Junior Sister Yueshan’s cultivation base and status, there isn’t much on this ship that could make her feel insecure.”

Apparently angered that Zhao Tianjiao was falling short of expectations, Bai Xiaochun slapped the table and said, “Not much that could make her feel insecure? Have you forgotten about that unclean thing?

“Listen, you can secretly set up a spell formation just outside Elder Sister Yueshan’s cabin door. Then when that unclean thing shows up again, it will get trapped, and you can be the first person to jump out and attack it. Not only will that show how mighty you are, but it will also show that you will always be there to protect Elder Sister Yueshan. With you there, she will definitely have a sense of security.”

Zhao Tianjiao apparently wasn’t very impressed by this plan. “I can easily set up a spell formation, but... I can’t control when the unclean thing shows up. What happens if it never comes back, or never goes near Junior Sister Yueshan’s cabin?”

Bai Xiaochun felt a headache coming on. Recently, he had come to find that although Zhao Tianjiao was cold and proud, he was not very flexible, and always tended to think of things one way. “Come

on, don't be stupid," he said. "You're the number one Chosen in the sect, right? Don't tell me you don't have some confidantes? Have your confidantes dress up like the unclean thing. Then you show up, an invincible knight in shining armor there to save the princess.

"Also," he continued, "you need to remember the right thing to say in the critical moment. You say, Junior Sister Yueshan, as long as I'm around, I'll never let anyone harm a hair on your head!"

Zhao Tianjiao thought it sounded a bit corny, and initially hesitated. However, considering how much he trusted Bai Xiaochun's sense of judgement, he finally nodded. Producing a jade slip, he sent a message to summon his followers.

Before long, eight of his followers showed up at Bai Xiaochun's cabin, one after the other. All of them clasped hands and bowed to Bai Xiaochun and Zhao Tianjiao, expressions of utter respect on their faces as they wondered why they had been called.

"Xiaochun, which ones do you think would do best?" Zhao Tianjiao asked.

Bai Xiaochun looked the group over. Eventually, his eyes came to fall upon the two cultivators from the Hall of Devil Slayers on Sky Quarter Rainbow, the same ones who had offended him not too long ago. Even as they shivered, he said, "These two Junior Brothers look familiar, how about them?"

The two followers already had bad feelings about what was to come.

Chapter 455: Elder Sister, Hear Me Out

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had already made his choice, Zhao Tianjiao dismissed the others, then turned to look at the two who had been selected.

“This is one of the most important things in my entire life,” he said to them, “and it all depends on you two!”

The two cultivators immediately got nervous, and at the same time, felt ill premonitions about what was to come. They exchanged a quick glance, but knowing that they had no choice in the matter, they both nodded and asked what they were supposed to do.

After Zhao Tianjiao explained everything, the followers’ eyes turned blank with shock. Upon hearing that they were to dress up as villains and then allow Zhao Tianjiao to beat them up, they couldn’t help but grumble inwardly at how Bai Xiaochun nursed his grudges. How could he still be interested in getting revenge over a minor event from so long ago? However, Zhao Tianjiao was obviously very serious about the matter, and they were his followers, so they had no choice but to agree.

Clasping hands, Zhao Tianjiao bowed and said, “Don’t worry. When I attack you, it will look quite fierce, but I won’t hit you very hard. You’ll have plenty of time to just run away.”

The two followers gritted their teeth as they glanced furtively at Bai Xiaochun. By this point, they had both determined to never again do anything to provoke him; it was truly frightening how he never let anything go, and wreaked his revenge in the most complicated ways....

Bai Xiaochun stood off to the side, all smiles. Inwardly, he was snorting coldly; the truth was that he really had nursed that grudge, and when he thought about how one of these cultivators had asked for 1,000,000 merit points to help him, and the other

had told him to wait for five years, he couldn't help but feel angry.

After going over the plan several times, the two followers left miserably. As for Zhao Tianjiao, he was filled with anticipation. According to Bai Xiaochun, they couldn't delay at all, and would carry out the plan that very night. Upon success, Zhao Tianjiao would have made significant progress in getting closer to Chen Yueshan.

"It will definitely work!" Zhao Tianjiao said to himself as he left to get ready.

As the sky grew dark outside, Zhao Tianjiao set up a whole series of spell formations outside of Chen Yueshan's cabin, using all the power of his cultivation base to do so.

Considering how he truly loved Chen Yueshan, it didn't matter that this was all part of an act; he was meticulous in how he set up the spell formations, not holding anything back. He even used some special materials to make the spell formations especially effective against illusory spirit entities.

Before long, it was the dead of night. Master God-Diviner and the other Dao protectors wanted to come along to watch, but having so many people present would attract too much attention, so the only person Zhao Tianjiao brought along to deck 2 was Bai Xiaochun.

"I have to be here," Bai Xiaochun said quietly. "That's the only way for me to direct things properly. Tonight is too important to leave things up to chance!" Zhao Tianjiao was fully convinced. Without Bai Xiaochun here, he wouldn't have the faintest idea what to do.

Therefore, he led Bai Xiaochun to a corner with a clear vantage point of the entire corridor, and then used a deva-level magical device to cloak him in invisibility. Finally, he took a deep breath and stood there to wait for the next phase of the plan.

Time passed, and the two of them remained in place, unspeaking.

As the moments ticked by, Zhao Tianjiao got more nervous, as did Bai Xiaochun. Of course, Bai Xiaochun was nervous about seeing his meticulously scripted plan come to life.

“The time has come for Love Saint Bai Xiaochun to shine!” he murmured to himself, eyes glittering. They waited in silence for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, after which two shadowy figures suddenly appeared, dressed in voluminous black robes with deep hoods that covered their faces. Faint mist surrounded them, making them seem almost like illusory spirit creatures.

Of course, these were Zhao Tianjiao’s two followers, and considering that their faces were covered, it was impossible to see the bitter looks on them. Gritting their teeth, they headed at full speed toward Chen Yueshan’s cabin.

As they approached, they did as they had been instructed by Bai Xiaochun, and emitted bizarre shrieking noises that echoed out in all directions.

The next part of the plan was for Zhao Tianjiao to leap out with a roar, looking like he would fight to the death rather than allow Chen Yueshan to be hurt.

But then, even as the two followers began to shriek, and Zhao Tianjiao tensed in preparation to take action, his expression turning into one of rage...

There was an unexpected turn of events.

All of a sudden, the door to Chen Yueshan’s cabin was violently kicked open from inside.

Then, Chen Yueshan herself appeared, her eyes flashing with bluish-green light as she transformed into a series of afterimages. Right hand flashing with an incantation gesture, she sent a gale force wind surging out toward one of Zhao Tianjiao’s two followers.

Blood sprayed out of the young man's mouth, and he staggered

backward as if he had been struck by a mountain. At the same time, Chen Yueshan snorted coldly and took a step forward to appear in front of the other of the two followers. Clenching her right hand into a fist, she unleashed a powerful and even somewhat manly punch.

Cracking sounds reached Bai Xiaochun's ears, whose eyes went wide as he watched the two cultivators being beaten backward by the shocking power of Chen Yueshan's fleshly body, blood spraying out of their mouths.

Gasping, he said, "This... this...."

Zhao Tianjiao was equally struck mute; things were not playing out how Bai Xiaochun had planned, and as of this moment, he had absolutely no idea what he should do.

Chen Yueshan's eyes were flickering with killing intent; she had a profound cultivation base, and although she had pretended to not pay much attention to Ji Fang's death, the truth was that from that moment on, she had been extra vigilant. Zhao Tianjiao had been able to get close to her cabin undetected because of his own incredible cultivation base, but as soon as his two followers got close, she noticed them.

Zhao Tianjiao's two followers were already soaked with blood, and were shedding so many tears of sorrow that they could form a new Heavenspan Sea....

From what the two of them could tell, if the fight went on much longer, they would both be killed. Therefore, even as Chen Yueshan was about to press the attack, the two of them both threw back their hoods to reveal their faces.

"Elder Sister, hear me out...."

"Don't hit me, Elder Sister...."

Even as the words escaped their lips, they couldn't help look over at Zhao Tianjiao, who was standing there with his jaw hanging

open.

The lamentations shining within the eyes of the followers couldn't have been more clear. You said it was just an act.... You said it would only be fake blows.... You said we would have plenty of time to run away....

Eyes flashing, Chen Yueshan snorted and looked in Zhao Tianjiao's direction.

Beads of sweat were running down Zhao Tianjiao's forehead, and his heart was pounding wildly with alarm. Without even thinking about it, he turned to look at the place where Bai Xiaochun was hiding in the cloak of invisibility. Bai Xiaochun's heart was also pounding; never could he have imagined that the seemingly soft and gentle Elder Sister Yueshan, who so often had blushed at the sight of Zhao Tianjiao, would be so explosively violent and terrifyingly fierce.

Most nerve-wracking of all was the thought of what would happen if Chen Yueshan found out that he had been directing Zhao Tianjiao in his attempt to seduce her. Would she fly into a rage and vent her explosive temper on him...?

Bracing himself, Zhao Tianjiao said, "Junior Sister, I--"

However, before he could continue with any sort of explanation, a bloodcurdling scream echoed out from deck 3, a scream filled with the utmost terror and indescribable fear. Everyone who heard it was immediately shaken.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell, Zhao Tianjiao's pupils constricted, and Chen Yueshan looked similarly serious. Zhao Tianjiao's two followers gasped.

Before any of them could react, a white, shadowy figure flew up from deck 3 to deck 2.

It was impossible to see clearly, but it had a freezing aura that spread out in all directions, causing ice to build up on everything,

and causing everyone's souls to suddenly feel as if they might turn to ice.

On this very night, the unclean thing... chose to make a comeback!!

As soon as that white shadow appeared, Zhao Tianjiao, being the one with the highest cultivation base among the group, quickly took action. He was not acting in the heroic way that Bai Xiaochun had asked him to, but instead, was immeasurably grim. A murderous aura burst out from him, making him look like a god of death as he strode toward the white shadow.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as Zhao Tianjiao attacked with incredible power. Lightning bolts appeared, each thrumming with incredible power. Such lightning bolts would cause even Nascent Soul cultivators to frown, and as they converged onto Zhao Tianjiao's person, they emitted heaven-shaking, earth-shattering power.

Before the white shadow could reach Chen Yueshan, Zhao Tianjiao slammed into it, causing a huge boom to echo out!

Bai Xiaochun gasped. He had been aware that Zhao Tianjiao was strong enough to kill Nascent Soul experts, but to see him in action personally was quite a different experience.

“Elder Brother Zhao, I can't believe you're so strong!!”

Chapter 456: Mysterious White Shadow

Even as Bai Xiaochun looked over, Zhao Tianjiao threw his head back and roared, performing a double-handed incantation that caused the countless lightning bolts to converge on his palms in the form of a pair of one-meter-wide spheres.

Although the lightning started out as silver, in the blink of an eye, it turned golden, and then shot directly toward the white shadow.

“Be destroyed!” Zhao Tianjiao shouted, his energy surging in such shocking fashion that Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but gasp at the sight.

“So badass!” Bai Xiaochun thought, completely shaken. The dazzling balls of lightning were blindingly bright, and pulsed with a terrifying power that was incredibly astonishing.

The white shadow was difficult to make out clearly, as if it weren’t even corporal, but rather, a glob of light. But suddenly, it twisted and distorted, transforming into a white hand that shot forth toward Zhao Tianjiao with incredible speed.

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out into the dark of night, filling the entire ship, which was when Bai Xiaochun realized that Zhao Tianjiao’s goal was actually to arouse everyone on board. If he could get more people to come and join the fight, they could pool their power to eradicate the white shadow once and for all.

However, Zhao Tianjiao had underestimated the power of the white shadow. When the huge hand came into contact with the balls of lightning, a huge boom rang out, and blood sprayed out of Zhao Tianjiao’s mouth as his lightning spheres collapsed into pieces.

Bai Xiaochun had never seen lightning destroyed like this before; it transformed into countless sparks which scattered around in all

directions, accompanied by crackling, pitter-patter sounds as it hit the walls of the corridor.

The white shadow was powerful, but was still shaken by Zhao Tianjiao's full-power attack, which shoved it backward a few meters, and even caused it to dim a bit. But then, it shivered, splitting up into nine different parts that all shot toward Zhao Tianjiao, apparently intent on either possessing or consuming him.

Simultaneously, a frigid coldness spread out from the shadow that seemed capable of freezing the soul.

When Chen Yueshan saw the danger Zhao Tianjiao was in, her face fell, and she leapt forward, right hand clenched into a fist that rocketed toward the incoming white shadows. Simultaneously, her left hand flashed in an incantation gesture, causing bursts of moonlight to gather around her, merging together into the image of a full moon.

Bizarre light streamed out from the moon which, under the direction of another incantation gesture, poured into Chen Yueshan herself as she shot toward the white shadows.

Shockingly, as she passed along, the power of Time erupted out, as though the moonlight itself were causing everything it touched to age!

Zhao Tianjiao's eyes were burning with anger in this critical moment of danger. Taking a deep breath, he suddenly shoved his hands out in front of him, causing thunderclaps to echo out as a whole series of golden balls of lightning began to build up around him.

However, things weren't over yet. Zhao Tianjiao's two followers also joined in the fight, gritting their teeth as they bravely leapt toward the seemingly illusory white shadows.

As everyone joined forces in the fight, Bai Xiaochun gritted his

teeth off to the side. He knew that, considering everyone was working together, if he didn't join in, he would never have the face to appear in front of Zhao Tianjiao and the others later on. Roaring, he emerged from his cloak of invisibility and charged toward the white shadows.

In his anxiety, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but wonder why no one else had shown up to help. However, the truth was that from the moment the white shadow had appeared up until now, only about ten breaths of time had passed.

Even as everyone joined forces, the nine separate white shadows which had just sprang into motion changed directions. Two of them shot toward Zhao Tianjiao's followers, two headed toward Chen Yueshan, two headed toward Bai Xiaochun, and the remaining three continued toward Zhao Tianjiao.

More rumbling sounds echoed out. The white shadows slammed into the two followers, causing blood to spray out of their mouths as they staggered backward, trembling. Not only were their lips turning purple, but the hair all over their body was turning white. However, what was most shocking of all to Bai Xiaochun was that their eyes were turning blank, as if their souls were flickering on the verge of being extinguished.

Chen Yueshan also noticed that, and let out a furious shout. At the same time, her Moon Time Disk slammed into the two white shadows, causing a boom to ring out, and leaving Chen Yueshan shuddering in place. Cracks even spread out across the floor beneath her feet. At the same time, numerous frigid ice spikes appeared all around her, blocking her path and making it impossible for her to move. Blood oozed out of the corners of her mouth as she shouted, "Watch out, Elder Brother Zhao! It's a soul attack!!"

Simultaneously, she performed numerous incantation gestures and pressed her finger down on various acupoints to prevent her injuries from worsening.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he closed in on the two white shadows, performing an incantation gesture with his right hand to unleash the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. Instantly, Frigid Master power spread out in all directions; he was fighting cold with cold!

As rumbling sound spread out, Bai Xiaochun trembled visibly; he was currently in the late Gold Core stage, making his frigid qi incredibly shocking. By this point, he would even be able to cause ice to build up on Heavenspan River water. However, the frigid coldness being utilized by the white shadows was different than his own, and also different than the type he remembered the statue of Gongsun Wan'er using. This was a type of coldness that could cause the soul to fall into a deep slumber!

It truly was... a soul attack!

Bai Xiaochun's face fell as he sensed the frigid qi pouring into him and rushing toward his head!

In that moment of crisis, he let out a powerful roar, simultaneously drawing upon his Undying Live Forever Technique as he lifted his left foot up and then slammed it down into the ground!

What he was unleashing was not incredible fleshly body power, but rather... the Undying Hex!

Furthermore, he wasn't using the Undying Hex on his opponent, but rather, himself!

Cracking sounds echoed out as rifts spread out across the surface of his skin, apparently coming from the inside of his body to the outside. In the blink of an eye, they had completely covered him, and also prevented the frigid qi from invading his soul.

Everything happened so quickly that Bai Xiaochun really had no time to react; everything he was doing came from instinct alone, even his use of the Undying Hex.

Battle instinct was something that Bai Xiaochun had learned about back in the Luochen Mountains. Perhaps it was his terror regarding death, or his intense obsession with being able to live forever, but either way, in moments of crisis such as this, his instincts were more on point than ever.

As the effects of his Undying Hex spread, Bai Xiaochun found that the invading frigid qi was blocked outside of him, and what was inside of him was being forced out.

Even as Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief, his face suddenly twitched as he looked over at Zhao Tianjiao, who was currently under attack by three white shadows. The shadows easily destroyed all of the spheres of lightning that Zhao Tianjiao had unleashed, and then formed together into a white sword that stabbed toward his forehead.

Zhao Tianjiao's face fell as, at the same time, the ground beneath his feet began to freeze up. In that moment of ultimate danger, Bai Xiaochun opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, causing control power to erupt out toward the flying sword.

"Stop right there!!" he shouted as violet light streamed out from his third eye, backed by his late Gold Core stage cultivation base. The light then wrapped around the white sword, which lurched to a stop right in front of Zhao Tianjiao.

That slight pause was the opportunity Zhao Tianjiao needed. Before, he had been sure that he wouldn't be able to avoid the blow, and had planned to let the sword stab his forehead, and then take advantage of the moment in which his opponent attacked his soul to use some other method to fight back. Although he had been confident in being able to succeed, it still would have been a dangerous move. But now that Bai Xiaochun was helping him, it was without the slightest hesitation that he took action, causing his eyes to become completely replaced by flickering, golden lightning!

“Lightning Detonation!” he roared. Instantly blinding lightning erupted from his eyes, spreading out in all directions. The white sword instantly began to fall to pieces. Then it retreated, and all of the other white shadows flew toward it, taking a human shape that seemed to look deeply at Zhao Tianjiao and then Bai Xiaochun before fading away.

It almost seemed as if it could come and go as it pleased!

Chapter 457: Elder Brother Zhao, You're Hurt!

After the white shadow vanished, Zhao Tianjiao's two followers coughed up more mouthfuls of blood. However, because the source of the frigid qi was gone, they were finally able to suppress it, leaving them as ashen-faced as death and looking around with lingering fear.

Both of them felt overwhelmed with grief at how unlucky they were. First, they were attacked by Chen Yueshan, only to be surprised by an actual spirit creature, whereupon they nearly lost their lives.

Of course, the reason for it all was Bai Xiaochun, and as of this moment, they yet again swore to themselves that they would never do anything to provoke him. And in fact, they were already trying to think of ways to curry his favor. After all, if they got swept up in any more of Bai Xiaochun's sudden brainstorm, they might end up getting killed before they even got to the Wildlands.

As for Chen Yueshan, after looking around to confirm that the white shadow was gone, and the ice spikes surrounding her were fading away, she turned her attention to Zhao Tianjiao.

Zhao Tianjiao was sweating and gasping for breath. Ever since reaching the mid Gold Core stage, it had been rare for him to encounter anyone who was a match for him in a fight. And then he reached the great circle of the Gold Core stage, after which the only opponents who could cause problems for him were Nascent Soul experts. As such, he had come to be quite confident in his abilities.

But at the moment, his heart was pounding with fear. From what he could tell, the cultivation base power unleashed by that white shadow was definitely less than the Nascent Soul stage!

“It had battle prowess comparable to the great circle of Core Formation. And yet it was so formidable that not even Nascent Soul experts could match up to it!” Breathing deeply, Zhao Tianjiao looked around the area and realized that, up to this point, they were still alone. No one had come to investigate the sounds of battle. Apparently, that white shadow had sealed down the entire area just before the fighting broke out.

Now that the shadow was gone, though, the sealing had been removed.

As Zhao Tianjiao got his breathing under control, he prepared to go track down the white shadow. As for Chen Yueshan, she moved to follow.

Off to the side, Bai Xiaochun was wiping the sweat from his brow and pondering how he was willing to go the extra mile for Zhao Tianjiao, when suddenly he realized that Zhao Tianjiao seemed to want to go chase after the shadow. Bai Xiaochun immediately cleared his throat loudly.

When Zhao Tianjiao didn't notice, Bai Xiaochun's anger spiked, and he cleared his throat even louder.

Thankfully, Zhao Tianjiao hadn't reached the point of being completely beyond hope. After hearing Bai Xiaochun clear his throat, he stopped in place, suddenly remembering that the point of tonight's mission wasn't the spirit entity, but rather, to make sure that Chen Yueshan felt a sense of security.

Suddenly, his heart swelled with gratitude for all the help Bai Xiaochun had given him. Glancing over at him, he couldn't help but think that Bai Xiaochun really was a true friend. Putting a somber expression on his face, he abandoned any thoughts of chasing after the white shadow, and instead held his arm out to prevent Chen Yueshan from proceeding any further.

“Junior Sister Yueshan,” he said calmly, “there's no need to chase after it. Since the spirit entity decided to flee, I doubt it can

be tracked down any time soon. If we go running off into the night, it could easily cut us down one by one.”

“If only father were back!” Chen Yueshan said through gritted teeth, both fear and anger visible in her eyes. “Then that damned spirit would definitely have been destroyed in body and soul!”

Based on what she knew of her own battle prowess, if she had been alone just now, she would have been no match for the white shadow. Without Zhao Tianjiao there, she might have met a similar fate as Ji Fang.

The mere thought of Ji Fang’s grisly death left Chen Yueshan’s heart pounding with fear.

“Many thanks, Elder Brother Zhao,” she said softly.

Zhao Tianjiao’s heart leapt with excitement, but he didn’t let it show on his face. Turning to Chen Yueshan, he spoke in the deep voice that Bai Xiaochun had instructed him to use, making sure it was coupled with a look of complete sincerity. “Junior Sister Yueshan, as long as I’m around, I won’t let you get hurt in any way!”

Clearly, Zhao Tianjiao was willing to brave countless spears and swords, even seas of flame for Chen Yueshan’s sake. He would face countless dangers, and go through hell and high water without even a single frown! He would die for her without regret!

His words, the expression on his face, the way that he had fought heroically against the white shadow, and most especially the sincerity in his eyes, made him seem to thrum with both veins of steel and tender sentiments. When he looked into Chen Yueshan’s eyes as he spoke, it was like molten lava pouring into her heart.

Chen Yueshan instantly began to breathe more rapidly, and her heart started racing as wildly as a frightened baby deer. The sensation she got from looking at Zhao Tianjiao made her almost dizzy, and as she heard his words ringing in her ears, and saw him

standing there like an indomitable hero, she thought back to everything they had experienced just now, and for some unknown reason, suddenly felt a strong sense of security.

Gradually, her face began to flush, and she bowed her head, her mind blank, as if she wasn't even sure of what she was thinking.

Zhao Tianjiao's two followers gasped, and their faces went pale. Although they had already recovered from being injured, when they saw Chen Yueshan's expression change, they couldn't help but think back to the instructions Bai Xiaochun had given earlier, and all of a sudden, he became more godlike to them than ever.

"I can't believe it actually worked!" the first one thought.

"Heavens!" thought the other. "Elder Sister Chen's affections have clearly been aroused!"

The two followers exchanged a shocked look.

Zhao Tianjiao was already going wild with excitement, and had to struggle to keep himself under control. He almost couldn't restrain himself from throwing his head back and roaring to the sky. As of this moment, everything he had done was worth it, and his gratitude toward Bai Xiaochun couldn't be greater. At the moment, he wanted to reach out and embrace Chen Yueshan, but then he hesitated, nervous about the fact that he didn't know what to do next. He quickly looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun immediately sighed inwardly. "How can Zhao Tianjiao be so dense?" he thought. "Even at this point he still has to ask me what to do? What a headache...."

For a moment, he simply rubbed his forehead and thought about how much of a good person he was.

Then he dropped his hand, and at that point, his expression was one of utter anxiety. Leaping forward toward Zhao Tianjiao, he suddenly shouted, "Elder Brother Zhao, you're... you're injured! Heavens! It looks bad. Elder Brother Zhao, are you alright?!"

Almost immediately, Bai Xiaochun's voice pierced into Chen Yueshan's daze, and she looked over with concern written on her face.

Zhao Tianjiao turned to Bai Xiaochun, shocked, and was about to say that he wasn't hurt at all, when Bai Xiaochun suddenly reached out to support him by the elbow, and simultaneously jabbed him hard in the back.

Zhao Tianjiao finally realized what was going on. Letting out a miserable groan, he caused his face to drain of blood and then said, "I'm hurt... I'm hurt, and it's bad!"

He suddenly lurched to the side as if he might fall over.

Chen Yueshan was in a bit of a daze, but when she saw what was happening, she leaped forward to support Zhao Tianjiao by the other elbow. This time, Zhao Tianjiao didn't act dense at all, and managed to fall into her arms.

"Junior Sister Yueshan, it doesn't matter if I'm injured, I still won't leave your side. I'm staying right here to protect you!"

Chen Yueshan's flush deepened, and her heart quivered. Not bothering to check whether he was really injured or not, she cast a glare at Bai Xiaochun and then began to lead Zhao Tianjiao in the direction of her cabin.

Zhao Tianjiao leaned up against her, and as he passed Bai Xiaochun, looked over and winked. By this point, his admiration for Bai Xiaochun was like the crashing of the waves of the Heavenspan Sea, ceaseless and unending....

Bai Xiaochun chuckled inwardly as he watched Chen Yueshan and Zhao Tianjiao head into her cabin. As of this moment, he felt so pleased with himself that he could hardly stand it. Without even thinking about it, he stuck his chin up, waved his sleeve, and assumed the pose of a lonely hero.

"With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun... ah, never mind. No

reducing anything to ashes today.” After all, it was a wonderful day for Zhao Tianjiao. Motioning to Zhao Tianjiao’s two followers to come along, he turned to leave deck 2.

The two followers didn’t dare to ignore Bai Xiaochun’s gesture, and immediately followed along.

Upon returning to deck 3, which was the origin of the original scream that had preceded the arrival of the white shadow, Bai Xiaochun mingled with the crowd to see if he could figure out what had happened. Soon, he found that the victim was one of the handful of chosen whose cabins were on deck 3.

His happy mood quickly dissipated, to be replaced with nervousness. He quickly hurried back to his own cabin, although even after closing the door, he still felt unsettled.

“Everyone who has died so far has been from deck 3. Plus, I actually attacked that white shadow just now. What if it comes back for revenge...?” The more he thought about the situation, the more anxious he got.

Chapter 458: I Can't Take It Anymore, Xiaochun

Bai Xiaochun felt jittery all the way until late in the night, until he eventually called over Master God-Diviner, Song Que, and even Chen Manyao to have a little chat.

Eventually, Chen Manyao and Song Que closed their eyes to meditate, leaving only Master God-Diviner and Bai Xiaochun awake to give each other cultivation advice. Whenever Bai Xiaochun started to brag about something, Master God-Diviner would respond very enthusiastically, which made Bai Xiaochun feel wonderful. Eventually, he even started to explain some of the tips and tricks he'd learned from imposter Nightcrypt.

Previously, Bai Xiaochun had assumed that the death of the cultivator the previous night would lead to another situation like before, in which a long period of time went before tragedy struck again. However, it was only the next evening when another scream ripped through the night, causing Bai Xiaochun to nearly leap up into the air in fear.

“What was that!?” he shouted. Master God-Diviner, Song Que and Chen Manyao were all alarmed, but went out nonetheless to find out what had happened. Soon, they learned that one of the more than fifty chosen assigned to deck 4 had been completely drained of blood during the night. Bai Xiaochun's fear continued to mount.

Things weren't over yet. Over the course of the next few days, the deaths continued to occur on deck 4, and with greater frequency. After a half a month had gone by, the nightly screams and deaths had all of the cultivators onboard shaking with fear.

Based on the look of the corpses after they were discovered, everyone came to the conclusion that the killer had incredible battle prowess that Core Formation cultivators were defenseless

against.

Terror gripped the hearts of all aboard. As for Bai Xiaochun, in his anxiety, he set up more and more spell formations both inside and outside of his cabin.

He wasn't the only one to do that. No one on deck 4 dared to sleep alone anymore, and huddled together in groups of between three to five. After that, the deaths seemed to slow down.

A few more days went by, and although no one died, the shadow of dread still loomed large, and Bai Xiaochun continued to fear that the white shadow he had fought would come back for revenge. Considering that there seemed to be safety in numbers, he finally asked for help from Gongsun Wan'er....

He told her that if she came to his room, everyone from the River-Defying Sect would be in one place, ready to brave the crisis together.

Upon receiving his invitation, a strange look appeared on Gongsun Wan'er's face. Covering a smile with her hand, she followed him back to his room to join the group.

When everyone was assembled, Bai Xiaochun felt a little better.

"With me and Wan'er here, and Master God-Diviner, Song Que, and Chen Manyao to back us up, even if that white shadow shows up, we'll definitely be able to break free and cry for help." Seven days later, not a single additional death had occurred. Bai Xiaochun was finally starting to relax, and once again began to think back to everything which had occurred with Zhao Tianjiao.

That was actually just about the time that Zhao Tianjiao actually came to see Bai Xiaochun, his face a bit flush and clearly in high spirits. A smile covered his face, as if he had just experienced some wonderful, life-changing event.

"Xiaochun, I think things are pretty much taken care of. Junior Sister Yueshan definitely doesn't look at me like she used to.

Hahaha!” Upon looking around the room, Zhao Tianjiao realized that there was a new addition to the group, that being Gongsun Wan’er.

He had never paid much attention to Gongsun Wan’er before, but gave her a nod as he walked in and sat down cross-legged in front of Bai Xiaochun.

“Okay, Xiaochun,” he continued excitedly, “what do we do now? What’s the next step? Am I supposed to reveal my true feelings to Junior Sister Yueshan?”

Zhao Tianjiao had never felt more blessed than he had during the past few days. He had visited Chen Yueshan every day in her cabin, where the two of them would sit down and spend the whole day chatting. In fact, they had spoken more to each other in the past few days than they had in the past ten years combined.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and then cast a very serious look at Zhao Tianjiao, complete with a bit of a glare. “What happened? Did a few days of happiness knock all the sense out of you?!”

“Let me ask you, Elder Brother Zhao, are you looking for a momentary burst of youthful passion, or a love that will last as long as the world itself?!” Bai Xiaochun’s words hit Zhao Tianjiao like a club to the face. Suddenly, his heart trembled, and a serious expression overtook his face.

“I don’t want youthful passion!” he said earnestly. “I want love that will last as long as the world!”

Bai Xiaochun’s expression softened, and it was with heartfelt sincerity that he continued, “Elder Brother Zhao....

“I know that you want to make Elder Sister Yueshan your Daoist partner as quickly as possible. But that’s the wrong way to look at it. Have you forgotten the Win Charm that I taught you, and how you have to keep calm!?”

“I already told you before, once you get her attention and give

her a sense of security, the next thing to do isn't to push things forward, it's to back off!

“You need to make yourself seem mysterious. You need to advance things by backing away! Make Elder Sister Yueshan incapable of resisting the urge to get near you. Leave her hanging, and make her take the initiative to reach out to you!

“You have to remember this point! Keep your distance, and don't seem too excited. Accept her a little bit at a time, that's all. Only then, after enough time has passed, can you provide her with a hard-earned reward!” Bai Xiaochun explained things meticulously, but couldn't prevent his words from revealing how disappointed he was that Zhao Tianjiao hadn't learned his lesson already.

As for Zhao Tianjiao, he was fully persuaded, and after Bai Xiaochun was done speaking, he gritted his teeth and said, “Alright, I'll do whatever you say!”

Filled with determination, he rose to his feet and left.

Over the following several days, Zhao Tianjiao did exactly as Bai Xiaochun had asked him to do. He started to back off from Chen Yueshan a bit, even disappearing for days at a time. When he did show up, he acted a bit coldly.

Occasionally, when Bai Xiaochun directed him to, he would revert to giving her enthusiastic attention.

Sometimes he was distant, sometimes he got close to her. At first Chen Yueshan was confused by this, but soon, she started to get angry.

Eventually, her confusion and anger combined, and she came to the conclusion that something was wrong. After that, she decided that she had to figure out exactly what was going on, and why Zhao Tianjiao seemed so different than she remembered.

At that point, she started to seek him out with the hopes of figuring out exactly why they had been going back and forth as if

fighting....

The process went on for about a month, during which time, the mysterious deaths aboard the ship resumed. Yet again, they occurred on deck 4, where some of the cultivators had stopped sticking together in groups, and had gone off on their own. It was those solitary cultivators who ended up being killed.

Once the screams and the corpses returned, fear yet again rose up in the hearts of everyone onboard. As the death toll rose, terror mounted to an almost unbearable degree.

No matter what types of investigations were carried out, no one could come up with any clues whatsoever. Furthermore, suspicions were running high, and few people trusted each other. Plus, it soon reached the point where two or three people were dying at a time....

Most shocking was one instance when a total of thirteen people died, all of their blood drained away until they were nothing more than desiccated corpses. Everyone onboard was shaken to the core.

Bai Xiaochun was completely terrified at how dangerous this ship was, and couldn't stop hoping that the three-eyed Chen Hefan would return....

"If this keeps up, there won't be anyone left to reach the Wildlands!" Scowling on the verge of tears, he even called Zhao Tianjiao and his two familiar followers over to his room, hoping to have safety in numbers.

Those two followers were also scared out of their minds, fearful of the white shadow coming to exact vengeance. They had been spending their days shaking in their boots, so when Bai Xiaochun asked for them to join him, they were actually elated, and couldn't help but rejoice at how wonderfully he was treating them. They immediately began to fawn over him and seek favor, offering to do anything he wished without the slightest complaint.

A few more days went by. By this point, the voyage was more than half over, and Zhao Tianjiao was reaching his breaking point. He felt like he was boiling inside; after all, he clearly loved Chen Yueshan dearly, and yet wasn't able to get close to her.

As for Chen Yueshan, she persistently tried to get to the bottom of the strange situation. Zhao Tianjiao very much wanted to give voice to his true feelings, but whenever he reminded himself of Bai Xiaochun's plans, he swallowed his words.

Even still, he eventually couldn't take it anymore. One evening, he returned to Bai Xiaochun's cabin to find his own followers next to the reclining Bai Xiaochun, massaging his shoulders and legs. One of them was even quietly asking Bai Xiaochun if the massage was comfortable.

Zhao Tianjiao looked haggard and thin as he stared at Bai Xiaochun and said, "Xiaochun, I can't take it anymore. I can't count how many times I've wanted to reveal my true feelings. If things keep going like this, I don't see how I can be with Junior Sister Yueshan for as long as the world exists."

Chapter 459: Confession Of Love....

Bai Xiaochun was currently staring in shock at Zhao Tianjiao. His recent days had been spent in abject fear as he thought nonstop about how to defend himself if the white shadow returned. Having not talked with Zhao Tianjiao about the matter for some time, he'd almost forgotten about the whole situation.

Zhao Tianjiao's words immediately jolted him out of his reverie. Feeling guilty, he forced a smile onto his face and made a show of calculating some things on his fingers. Then he slapped his thigh.

"Perfect timing!" he said loudly. "Elder Brother Zhao, tomorrow at noon you will confess your love to Elder Sister Yueshan. This is the final move. It won't be long now before you can take that beautiful woman in your arms and never let her go for the rest of your life!"

Zhao Tianjiao seemed instantly enlivened, and began to pace back and forth in the room, his expression that of both excitement and anxiety. Hands clenched into fists, he seemed to be completely wrapped up in thinking about what was going to happen.

At one point, he suddenly stopped in place. "What happens if she rejects me?" he asked nervously. "What then?"

Bai Xiaochun sighed. "Considering Love Saint Bai Xiaochun's decades of experience dominating the field of love, I can tell you the main reason why declarations of love tend to fail. They're too rushed!

"But you're different," he continued, gesturing grandly. "You've spent a lot of time with Elder Sister Yueshan, and therefore, what you need to worry about most is your wording. Fear not. I, Bai Xiaochun, am extremely adept at such things, and can definitely provide you with some help!"

Zhao Tianjiao was completely convinced of Bai Xiaochun's skills,

and therefore, would do anything he said. As far as he was concerned, with Bai Xiaochun there to help him, any difficulties he faced would be resolved as easily as a sharp blade could cut through bamboo.

“I’ll help you come up with a comprehensive plan,” Bai Xiaochun said with a calm smile that made him look more enigmatic than ever. Then, he and Zhao Tianjiao spent the entire night discussing the matter. In the morning, Zhao Tianjiao left, in high spirits and brimming with confidence.

Noontime came, and it was a beautiful day. A gentle breeze blew across a calm sea that had only slightly rolling waves. From a distance, the sea almost looked like a huge golden mirror.

Off in the distance were some of the unique seabirds that lived in the Heavenspan Sea, soaring about and letting out occasional cries.

Zhao Tianjiao stood at the prow of the ship, dressed in a long cyan robe and looking particularly handsome. His eyes shone with profound light, and from a distance, he looked as imposing as a mountain. His back was straight, and he seemed to brim with an intense energy that would cause him to instantly stand out in the eyes of anyone who came to look at him.

He was looking off into the distance, his hands folded at the small of his back, his chin raised, his hair fluttering in the breeze. He looked as attractive as a perfectly sculpted statue, seemingly divine and mighty in an otherworldly way.

Of course, no one could possibly know that Bai Xiaochun’s voice was actually speaking in his ear.

“No, no, no! Put your left hand on your hip. Yes. Yes! Hold your chin up as you look off into the distance!

“Keep that same look in your eye. Don’t change it!

“Move your left foot half a pace forward. Mhmm. Yes, that looks good. Wait, you seem too somber. This is a confession of love, not

an interrogation. Soften up a bit....”

Bai Xiaochun was tucked away in a nearby corner where he could see Zhao Tianjiao, and was transmitting instructions via divine sense. Whatever instructions he gave, Zhao Tianjiao followed immediately. He was nervous about what was to come, but had complete confidence in Bai Xiaochun, so he simply steeled himself and waited for the moment of truth.

“Okay, that’s perfect. Don’t move. The time you agreed to meet Elder Sister Yueshan is almost here.” Bai Xiaochun was also excited. All of his meticulous plans with Zhao Tianjiao recently came down to this moment. All the preparations were set. It was time for the final move.

“It has to work!” he murmured, clenching his hands into fists. Even as he waited in anticipation, Chen Yueshan slowly walked out from her cabin on deck 2.

She seemed different than normal, and had clearly dressed up a bit. She looked entrancing in her long, cyan robe, with her hair coiled up in braids to reveal her snow-white neck. Her skin was fair beyond belief, and as the noon sun shone down on her, she seemed pure, holy, and dazzlingly beautiful.

There was a bit of a flush to her face, something almost shy. She also seemed nervous, as was evidenced by how she unconsciously fiddled with a jade ring on her finger.

After stepping onto the main deck, she noticed Zhao Tianjiao at the prow, and slowly began to walk in his direction.

Bai Xiaochun ducked his head down and excitedly transmitted the news to Zhao Tianjiao. “She’s coming. Don’t look back! She’s walking right toward you!”

Zhao Tianjiao trembled imperceptibly, and did his best to maintain his pose, simultaneously sending some divine sense out to confirm that Chen Yueshan was walking in his direction. Before

long, she was standing there at his side, and her fragrance caused his heart to skip a beat before beginning to race.

“Why did you want to see me, Elder Brother Zhao?” she said softly, clutching at the insides of her sleeves with her delicate hands. For some reason, she found this version of Zhao Tianjiao to be somewhat strange, and yet at the same time, attractive.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes widened as he looked on, nervous that a mistake might be made.

Zhao Tianjiao slowly took a breath, but didn’t turn to look at her. Instead, he kept his gaze fixed on the sea beyond, quickly reviewing the words Bai Xiaochun had instructed him to speak. Suddenly, he pointed up into the sky and said, “Yueshan, see how pure and blue the sky is? My feelings for you are just like that, pure and free from the contamination of the mortal world. Eternally unchanging.”

In response to his words, Chen Yueshan looked up at the sky, and her heart suddenly began to beat a bit faster. Even her breathing turned a bit ragged.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but praise Zhao Tianjiao inwardly. At long last, he was finally getting into the swing of things. From Bai Xiaochun’s perspective, his wording just now had been perfect....

“It took me a long time to come up with that,” Bai Xiaochun thought, feeling very pleased with himself. However, in the same moment that Chen Yueshan looked up at the azure sky....

The muffled rumble of thunder could be heard as, for some unknown reason, the weather suddenly changed. In the blink of an eye, dark clouds began to form, and before Bai Xiaochun could even react, more thunder echoed out. As of this moment, the sky was no longer blue, but rather, had been contaminated into a grayish black color.

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped, and Zhao Tianjiao’s eyes went wide.

Even Chen Yueshan seemed taken aback.

“What’s... what’s going on?” Bai Xiaochun thought, gasping. Something about the situation definitely seemed strange.

Zhao Tianjiao didn’t say anything, and even Chen Yueshan appeared to be at a loss for words, and even a bit embarrassed. After a long moment passed, Zhao Tianjiao gritted his teeth and decided to proceed.

“Yueshan....” With that, he raised his voice and pointed out at the sea. “Look at how calm the sea is. It is like my heart, now that I have you in my life. Henceforth, I swear to the mountains and pledge to the seas that you and I shall share both honor and disgrace. Not a single woman in the entire world could ever cause my heart to even tremble in the slightest. It is just like this endless, tranquil sea, unmarred by the slightest wave!”

A tremor ran through Chen Yueshan as she followed the line of Zhao Tianjiao’s finger to look out at the sea. However, even as the words left his mouth....

More thunderous rumbling echoed out from the clouds, and huge raindrops began to fall, splashing down noisily onto the ship and the sea alike. Suddenly, huge waves appeared on the water, which was no longer calm at all....

Bai Xiaochun almost leapt to his feet, and was instantly covered in cold sweat. The events of the day were far too strange, and had Bai Xiaochun’s mind racing with all sorts of crazy thoughts about what was causing them.

“Could it be that I misjudged the destiny of these two lovers...?” he thought in surprise. Zhao Tianjiao was on the verge of tears; it was almost as if heaven and earth were directly opposing him, and intentionally turning his words against him. His fury began to mount, and yet, it was in that moment that Chen Yueshan suddenly laughed softly.

She was beautiful to begin with, but when she laughed, her eyes turning into twin crescent moons, she was even more exquisite. Reaching out her delicate, jade-like hand, she clasped Zhao Tianjiao's hand in hers, and immediately, her feelings were made clear.

Zhao Tianjiao shivered as his eyes met hers, and in that instant, a memory was created that would last for all eternity.

Chen Yueshan had fallen in love with Zhao Tianjiao long ago, back when her father had first taken him in as an apprentice. She had always been charmed by how bumbling and inarticulate he was in daily life, only to become a fierce tiger in critical moments.

She had even tried to get close to him in the past, but Zhao Tianjiao had never seemed to respond to her. He spent most of his time in training, and eventually, Chen Yueshan got disheartened, and buried her feelings away. Occasionally, she would think back to those emotions and sigh.

After the journey on the battleship began, and she saw Zhao Tianjiao walk out in a pink outfit, she had been shocked. Then, everything that happened after that had seemed something like a dream....

Bai Xiaochun let out a long sigh. Seeing what was happening now between Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan, he mused that even if he had misjudged their destiny, there was nothing he could have done differently. Chuckling, he reveled in his status as a love saint, and then stuck his chin up and assumed the pose of a lonely hero. Waving his sleeve, he murmured, "With the snap of a finger, I, Bai-
-"

However, even in that moment of self-satisfaction, and before he could finish speaking, the thunderous rumbling in the sky grew more intense, and several figures appeared, all of them flying at high speed toward the battleship.

At the head of that group was none other than that three-eyed

Chen Hetian!

Chapter 460: The One With The Spine

The deva was back!

“Father!”

“Master!”

Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan immediately backed away from each other, as if they had just been caught doing something wrong. At the same time, feelings of embarrassment and anxiety rose up in both of them.

Three-eyed Chen Hetian wore a grim expression as he glared at Zhao Tianjiao. Behind him, the five Nascent Soul cultivators all seemed exhausted, and yet, were still exchanging enigmatic smiles. Strange expressions could also be seen on their faces as they sized up Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan.

Because of Chen Hetian’s glare, and the odd expressions on the faces of the Nascent Soul experts, Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan immediately realized that... these old-timers had heard the entire confession of love from moments ago.

Furthermore, the strange phenomena in the sky and sea almost certainly had something to do with Chen Hetian.

Off to the side, Bai Xiaochun felt a chill running up his spine. All of a sudden, he was struck by a very bad feeling. He thought about trying to sneak away, but decided that wouldn’t be appropriate. Instead, he looked in a different direction and tried to pretend that he was just a passerby taking in the scenery. He even took out a flask of spirit alcohol and began to sip it slowly....

Zhao Tianjiao was sinking into his nervousness. The person he feared most in life was his Master, and at the moment, not only was he anxious, he was also embarrassed. However, Chen Yueshan was not. After the initial shock of her father’s arrival, she reached out again to grab Zhao Tianjiao’s hand, then looked up with an

expression that said she wouldn't back down an inch.

"Finally grew some spine, eh Zhao Tianjiao?" Chen Hetian said. Giving Zhao Tianjiao another good glare, he snorted coldly and looked over at Bai Xiaochun's hiding spot.

His gaze was like a razor-sharp knife that cut right down to Bai Xiaochun's heart. Bai Xiaochun looked up in thought for the briefest of moments, then caused his face to flush as if from drinking. Staggering a bit, he slurred, "Nice stuff!"

Swaying back and forth, he retreated backward and then ducked around the corner to escape Chen Hetian's gaze. Once out of sight, he began to hurry down the corridor.

Chen Hetian snorted again. Paying no attention to Bai Xiaochun, he led the five Nascent Soul cultivators up to the cabins on deck 1.

Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan exchanged a look. Then, Zhao Tianjiao forced himself to calm down. Bracing himself, he went off to offer formal greetings to his Master, as well as an explanation; he didn't want his Master to have any ill feelings toward Chen Yueshan or Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun jogged all the way back to his cabin. Once inside, an anxious expression could be seen on his face.

"If I had known this was going to happen, I would have had him confess his love yesterday! What a weird coincidence. How come old three-eyes had to return today...? If he finds out I'm the one who got Zhao Tianjiao together with his daughter, it could turn out to be a real disaster for me." The more he thought about the situation, the more nervous he got. And yet, there was nothing he could do other than sigh and try to come up with a contingency plan.

After a few days passed, Bai Xiaochun still hadn't seen Zhao Tianjiao. However, Chen Hetian hadn't come looking to cause problems, so Bai Xiaochun's anxiety started to ease. However, that

was when Chen Hetian actually issued an order throughout the ship.

“All disciples are to remain confined in their assigned cabins until they are called up to deck 1 for questioning!”

Chen Hetian’s voice sounded very somber, even angry. Not a single person aboard dared to disobey his orders, so Song Que and the other Dao protectors all returned to their assigned living quarters.

Soon, Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul experts began to make the rounds, inspecting each and every cabin. Obviously, they had been informed about the numerous deaths which had occurred while they were away, and were now making a thorough investigation.

The inspection was very meticulous. Next, all disciples, regardless of their ranking, were questioned thoroughly by Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul cultivators. Soon, it was Bai Xiaochun’s turn.

Bai Xiaochun nervously headed up to deck 1, and as soon as he was in the presence of three-eyed Chen Hetian and the other top experts, he clasped hands in greeting.

“Disciple Bai Xiaochun offers greetings, Seniors!”

“You’re Bai Xiaochun, huh?” Chen Hetian said, eyes shining brightly.

Bai Xiaochun nodded nervously, keeping his eyes fixed on the three-eyed old man.

Chen Hetian looked at him closely, then coolly said, “So you’re the one with the spine....”

Then he closed his eyes and let the Nascent Soul cultivators proceed with questioning him. One of those Nascent Soul experts had a gaze like lightning that seemed capable of piercing all illusions.

Bai Xiaochun answered all of their questions, and was soon dismissed. As he left, sweat dripping down his forehead, he sighed and thought, “What did old three-eyes mean when he said I’m the one with the spine...? Was he praising me? Or insulting me? I was obviously just trying to make sure his apprentice and his daughter are happy for the rest of their lives.... What am I supposed to do if he makes things difficult for me later on?” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t quite make heads or tails of the situation, and even after much thought, he was forced to sigh and give up any efforts to figure things out.

It took half a month for all of the disciples on the battleship to be questioned. Even after the investigation, though, no amount of analysis on the part of Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul cultivators could lead them to any conclusion on the subject.

They also inspected the corpses, of course, but the only result was that their expressions turned very grim, and they were left completely at a loss.

Thankfully, after Chen Hetian returned, no more deaths occurred. Time passed. Two more months went by, during which time Bai Xiaochun never caught sight of Zhao Tianjiao or Chen Yueshan. He really had no idea what was happening with them.

It was only in the sixth month of the voyage, when land appeared on the horizon again, that he finally saw them.

After all the time which had passed, Zhao Tianjiao’s cultivation base seemed to have improved. His eyes sparkled as he appeared on the main deck, and it was the same with Chen Yueshan, who walked at his side. In fact, there was a faintly discernible aura on both of them that seemed to indicate that, with the necessary items to form a Nascent Soul, both of them could advance to the next cultivation stage.

Quite a few people noticed that, and were immediately envious. Obviously, Chen Hetian had returned with good fortune for his

apprentice and daughter.

Bai Xiaochun was in the middle of moping along on the main deck when he saw Zhao Tianjiao. He in turn saw Bai Xiaochun, and his expression brightened. Hurrying over, he pulled him off to the side and handed him a white bottle.

“Your sister-in-law and I saved this for you. It’s a bit of silver dragon blood. Consume that, and your cultivation base will advance quite a bit.”

Remembering that Chen Hetian and the Nascent Soul experts had gone chasing after a silver dragon, Bai Xiaochun was immediately excited and quickly took the white bottle. Seeing that Zhao Tianjiao still trusted and liked him, Bai Xiaochun felt very relieved.

“You already want me to call her sister-in-law?” he said with a smile. “Does she know?”

Now that he knew everything had been settled, he could sigh with relief. Obviously, old three-eyes wouldn’t be causing problems for him later....

Looking a bit awkward, Zhao Tianjiao cleared his throat and said, “Yeah, she knows.... Your sister-in-law told me to express her profound thanks to you.”

Then he clasped Bai Xiaochun’s shoulder, and a serious expression appeared on his face.

“Xiaochun, you need to focus on your cultivation. From the look of things, you’ve been slacking off recently. That’s definitely not the right attitude. We’re going to reach the shore soon, and once we do, your battle prowess is going to be the crux of everything!

“I’m guessing you don’t know much about the Wildlands, so let me explain a few important details, so you’ll know what’s going on once we get there. These are some things that even I just recently learned from my Master.”

With that, Zhao Tianjiao pulled Bai Xiaochun further away from anyone else, apparently not caring at all that people realized how close they were with each other now. Lowering his voice, he said, “The Heavenspan Sea lies in the very middle of the Heavenspan Realm. Four rivers stretch out from it, which all break up into smaller branches. In that sense, they are almost like the branches of a tree. The areas near the water have spiritual energy, but the lands themselves are too vast, far larger than can be reached by all of the rivers. That is why there is so much land out there with no spiritual energy, the places which we call the Wildlands.

“The Wildlands don’t just exist far beyond the rivers, they also exist in the areas between each of the four main rivers. There are plenty of locations there that have no spiritual energy. That’s why the Great Wall was built.”

A very serious expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun’s face. He took the Great Wall very seriously, and had even asked Chen Manyao about it. As a result, he knew how important it was to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Therefore, despite having heard information similar to this before, he was still paying rapt attention. After all, this pertained to a ten-year trial that could very well result in his death if he wasn’t careful.

“The Great Wall is like a circle of protection that ensures that the main branches of the Heavenspan River can thrive in safety. It’s like a border of sorts, beyond which are the Wildlands. The Wildlands are barren and infertile, and constantly at war. Furthermore, within those Wildlands are not only vengeful souls, but also savage giants!”

“Savage giants?” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed. He couldn’t help but think about the powerful organization that backed Chen Manyao.

“I don’t understand too much about them myself. But apparently, the savage giants practice cultivation in much the

same way that we cultivators do, except that most of them cultivate body refinement exclusively. They're savage and brutal, and whenever they get their hands on a disciple of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, they eat them alive!"

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he gasped.

"Eat them alive?!"

Chapter 461: Disembarking

“The Wildlands are completely barren, so they absorb soul power from the souls they collect. Of course, they also thirst for spiritual energy, so whenever cultivators go into their lands, they try to capture them to drink their blood and absorb the power it contains. The barbaric savages have been our enemies since ancient times, and are always trying to get closer to the Heavenspan Sea to get spiritual energy. Our job is to keep them out.” Zhao Tianjiao seemed a bit surprised at how Bai Xiaochun had suddenly turned pale in the face, but didn’t think too much of it.

“That’s why the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect built three cities between the Heavenspan Sea and the Great Wall itself, to keep out the savages and the vengeful souls!”

Worried that Bai Xiaochun needed more than just a general introduction, he continued, “In a few days, we’ll disembark, and arrive at the first city. It’s called East Sea City, and has strong spiritual energy. Obviously, it’s the safest location behind the Great Wall.

“The further you get from East Sea City, the weaker the spiritual energy gets. The second city is called World City, where a large military force is garrisoned. It can be considered a transfer hub on the way to the Great Wall itself, but is also a major line of defense.”

By this point, Bai Xiaochun had suppressed his terror at the thought of being eaten alive, and was listening carefully to all the new details Zhao Tianjiao was providing.

“Beyond World City, the spiritual energy gets even weaker, until you reach the Great Wall itself. That’s the location of the third city, which is simply named Great Wall City. That is where the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s most terrifying, steel-veined cultivators are stationed. Any one of those cultivators can be

viewed as a god of death. Even I wouldn't dare to provoke any of them." As soon as Zhao Tianjiao mentioned Great Wall City, his eyes shone with respect and passion.

"Those cultivators form an army which is called the Hall of Steel Veins. They... are the true defenders of the Great Wall, and are at constant war with the Wildlands savages. Of course, the casualty rate among them is very high.

"According to what I've heard, the Hall of Steel Veins is broken up into five legions. Anyone who achieves the rank of captain in one of those armies will be very famous upon returning to the sect. After all, such a person would be backed by the Hall of Steel Veins, which surpasses even the devas. After all, the Hall of Steel Veins is the only hall in the sect... personally overseen by the demigod patriarch!"

Bai Xiaochun continued to nod in response to everything he was hearing, and couldn't help but think that the name of the Hall of Steel Veins was particularly impressive.

"As for me," Zhao Tianjiao continued, "my first goal is to go take a look at the Wildlands, maybe get some experience, and then... join the Hall of Steel Veins. After that, I'll make some impressive military contributions and fight to reach the rank of colonel!" [1. In Chinese, the names of these military ranks make it clear how many soldiers are under the command of a given rank. A captain leads 100 men, and a colonel leads 1,000. The details about the ranks will be recorded in the [AWE glossary](#) for future reference. Included in the info on the glossary is a super-minor spoiler in terms of a lower rank that isn't mentioned in this chapter, but will come up fairly soon.]

"Huh?" Bai Xiaochun said, looking in surprise at Zhao Tianjiao. For some reason, it seemed to him like Zhao Tianjiao was essentially talking about putting himself right in the path of death itself....

Zhao Tianjiao clasped Bai Xiaochun's shoulder again, and his eyes were warm as he continued, "The only place where a deva is stationed is in Great Wall City itself. Actually, one of the purposes of this journey is for my Master to relieve Senior Zhou from his position there. For the next hundred years, my Master will be stationed on the Great Wall, tasked with repelling any invasions!"

Although Zhao Tianjiao was actually older than Bai Xiaochun, the recent events caused him to view him as a very close friend. Zhao Tianjiao didn't have very many friends, and once he made one, that person was a brother for life.

"Xiaochun, getting a deva soul is only a secondary goal for me. My main purpose is to get into the Hall of Steel Veins. But you're different. You need to fight hard to get one of those deva souls.

"Remember, there are a lot of souls in the Wildlands. Every living entity that dies in the lands of Heavenspan ends up there, as long as their soul isn't destroyed. They travel along the Underworld River all the way through the Wildlands, which is one reason why the Wildlands represent death and hell!"

By this point, Zhao Tianjiao's voice was so low that he was clearly talking about secret matters, things that could not be spread to outsiders. And yet, fearing that Bai Xiaochun might end up pursuing the wrong path, he decided to clarify things a bit more. "Because souls have been building up there for years and years, it can be stated with certainty that there are definitely some deva souls there. Unfortunately, they only appear once every few thousand years, and are as rare as phoenix feathers or qilin horns. According to my Master's calculations, the number of deva souls that exist in all the Wildlands can probably be counted on two hands! Furthermore, the number of people who have used deva souls to become a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul expert are even fewer than that. There is only one, the Celestial."

Bai Xiaochun had often wondered exactly how many deva souls there could be in the Wildlands, so this new information left him

quite shocked. Considering that he already had two deva souls, he had often wondered if he could potentially... reach the legendary Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage.

However, after what Zhao Tianjiao had just told him, he realized that such a task would be far too difficult to accomplish. He had two deva souls in his bag, the value of which likely surpassed even his own imagination.

The thought of those two deva souls made him think of who had given them to him. One had come from Patriarch Frigidsect, and the other had come from... Du Lingfei!

“So, you shouldn’t try to pursue the path of the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul. It’s a dream, a fantasy that could never become reality. You should aim for deva beast souls. They are rare, but are more plentiful than deva souls. According to my Master’s calculations, there are probably fifty or so deva beast souls in the Wildlands, although nobody can be completely sure.” After offering a few more warnings and reminders, Zhao Tianjiao finally left, leaving Bai Xiaochun standing there alone, looking at the distant shore growing closer and closer.

“We’re almost there.... Ten years! What am I supposed to do for ten years?” Bai Xiaochun sighed.

Three days passed by in a flash, and the battleship continued to near the shore. One afternoon, virtually all the cultivators on board spontaneously began to gather on the main deck.

From there, it was possible to see an enormous green city rising up where the land met the ocean, part of which was a huge harbor.

The power of spell formations filled the area, as well as the flicker of magical symbols. Waiting on the docks were quite a large number of cultivators.

The ship began to slow down, and two hours later, the cultivators onboard were close enough to see the people on the

dock with their naked eye.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the huge battleship slowly came to a stop roughly five kilometers away from the harbor itself. At that point, eight somber-faced Nascent Soul cultivators flew out from the city to receive them, followed by large numbers of Core Formation cultivators.

“Greetings, Senior Chen!”

“Please accept our congratulations, Senior Chen!”

Voices rolled out like waves as Chen Hetian and the five Nascent Soul cultivators appeared. After nodding in response to the greetings, they simply flew off into the city.

Some formalities were exchanged, and then Bai Xiaochun and the rest of the hundreds of Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars flew out over the five kilometers of the Heavenspan Sea into the East Sea City.

The entire way, the Core Formation cultivators who had emerged from the city were sizing up the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, and made no attempt to conceal their disdain. Obviously, these were seasoned veterans who were looking at a group of new recruits.

Bai Xiaochun also took the opportunity to measure up the Core Formation cultivators from East Sea City. It didn't take long for him to realize that, without a single exception, they all had intensely murderous auras, even those who were in the Early Core Formation stage. These were people who were no strangers to killing, and their eyes even had a crimson tinge to them.

According to what Bai Xiaochun had heard, that crimson tinge came after killing large amounts of vengeful souls. Apparently, it was the outworking of some sort of natural law, and there was no harm to it whatsoever. Furthermore, it made a person seem quite threatening.

Before long, they were in the city, and unexpectedly, nobody came out to receive them. However, one of the East Sea City cultivators who was in the great circle of Core Formation handed everyone a command medallion.

“Welcome to the sect outpost. This is your one and only authentication device, so don’t lose it! If you go out into the Wildlands and try to come back into the Great Wall without it, you will be refused entrance. Be very careful with it.

“There are no official arrangements for any of you. This is a trial by fire that is set to last for ten years. During that time, you have to go out into the Wildlands at least three times. Make sure records are kept of any such outing. If you don’t meet that requirement, then when the ten years are up, you won’t be allowed to return to the sect.

“Finally, let me remind yourself to take good care of yourselves. Remember... you are only allowed to stay in East Sea City for a single day. For every day beyond that in which you remain, the total length of your trial by fire will be increased by an entire month. After leaving East Sea City, be very careful to control your usage of spiritual power.” With that, the man turned and flew off into the city.

Bai Xiaochun was already very anxious. This unfamiliar East Sea City had actually seemed like a pretty nice place, and he had initially planned to stay here for as much of the ten-year period as possible, only to find out that he couldn’t.

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars exchanged glances. Obviously, everyone had their own plans and goals in this unfamiliar location, and it only took moments before people began to disperse and head off in different directions.

Chapter 462: You People Just Wait!

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath as a very serious expression played out on his face.

Back when he was on the eastern Heavenspan River, he had always felt as the River-Defying Sect were still nearby. But now, he was in a completely strange place, with virtually no familiar faces around whatsoever.

It was with a very somber expression that he looked over at Song Que and his other Dao protectors and said, “In a strange place like this, we have to stick together more than ever! Song Que, Master God-Diviner, Chen Manyao, as my Dao protectors, the time has come to show your true skill and ability!”

With that, he flicked his sleeve, eyes shining brightly.

“For the most part, I have been the one to protect the lot of you, whether it was in Sky City or on Sky Quarter Rainbow, and even on the battleship. But now... the time has come for you to protect me. Here’s the plan, we’ll--” Before, he could finish speaking, Chen Manyao cleared her throat.

“I need to leave now, Xiaochun....”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun blurted.

“It’s not that I don’t want to stay and help you out. But... you know the situation. I... I want to go home.” She gave him a profound look that seemed to say she didn’t wish to part with him. It even contained other, unique implications. A long moment passed. Then she sighed and took a curtseying bow.

“We’ll meet again if destiny will have it....” With that, she turned and disappeared into East Sea City. Although her departure was a bit sudden, it wasn’t completely unexpected to Bai Xiaochun. He knew that her home lay beyond the Great Wall, and that one of main reasons for coming with him was because she wanted to

return there. She had said as much even back in the River-Defying Sect.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and looked over at Song Que and Master God-Diviner. Just when he was about to explain his plan to them, Song Que snorted coldly. Looking around at East Sea City, as well as the lands beyond, he thought to himself, “This is the perfect place for me. I, Song Que, am the type of person who likes to live in the middle of extreme danger. The more brutal a place is, the more opportunities there will be for deadly training. That is the only way to get more powerful. This is my chance to crush Bai Xiaochun ten times over!”

Heart surging with heroic aspirations, and face covered with a look of utter determination, he didn’t even deign to look at Bai Xiaochun as he said, “Bai Xiaochun, whether it was in the Blood Stream Sect, the River-Defying Sect, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, or on that battleship, I was never able to measure up to you.... But this time, in this place, I will finally surpass you. This is my last opportunity, and I won’t let it slip by!”

With that, he transformed into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

“Que’er....” Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes wide, his body trembling. The scene which was playing out seemed very familiar.... Suddenly very nervous, he looked over at Master God-Diviner.

“Master God-Diviner, you--”

“Junior Patriarch... um... I don’t really want to part ways, but I’ve been given some assignments by the Hall of Defenders. Um... see you in ten years, alright?” Master God-Diviner looked a bit embarrassed, but was actually not being deceptive at all. The Hall of Defenders really had given him some assignments.

After blinking a few times, Master God-Diviner clasped hands and bowed, then flew away.... As of this point, Bai Xiaochun was left standing alone with Gongsun Wan’er. She looked over at him,

smiled faintly, then left.

Bai Xiaochun looked around at the enormous East Sea City, stunned. Nothing looked familiar, and he felt completely alone, and at the same time, angry.

He also couldn't help but recall what had happened upon arriving at Sky City in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, how Song Que and the others all abandoned him....

“Fine! Want to spread your wings? Go ahead. If you have what it takes, you can come looking for me later!” He was both furious and depressed, a mixture which actually got his fighting spirit quite worked up.

“I'm definitely going to live it up here, and that's when you people will realize that abandoning me for the second time was the worst mistake of your lives!” Bai Xiaochun really was very angry at how everyone had just disappeared without a trace, leaving him completely unprepared. Considering what had occurred last time, he had assumed that his Dao protectors would never again abandon him....

“You eat my food, drink my alcohol, use my stuff!? Fine, you people just wait!” Gritting his teeth, he looked around, scowling on the verge of tears as he tried to decide what to do and where to go. That was when one particular group of six people who had been just about to leave changed directions and headed toward the lonely Bai Xiaochun.

“Xiaochun!” someone called out. It was none other than Zhao Tianjiao. Bai Xiaochun turned and saw him, as well as Chen Yueshan, who were flanked by two male cultivators and two female cultivators. The two male cultivators were the very same followers of Zhao Tianjiao who had been so impressed by Bai Xiaochun recently.

As for the female disciples, Bai Xiaochun didn't recognize them, but based on what Zhao Tianjiao had told him early on about Chen

Yueshan, he assumed that they were the two good friends of hers who already lived in East Sea City.

“Elder Brother Zhao,” Bai Xiaochun called out.

Laughing heartily, Zhao Tianjiao landed next to Bai Xiaochun and clapped him on the shoulder. “What are you doing here alone? If you don’t have anything else to do, why not join us? It’s probably better to stick together anyway. I’m planning to go do a bit of sightseeing and eventually head out past the Great Wall.”

Smiling faintly, Bai Xiaochun said, “I told my Dao protectors to go their own way. They have their own destinies, and I don’t wish to block their paths to the future. As for me, it’s only natural that I want to tackle the world on my own. Only in that way can my heart be as tranquil as the sky, and my mind as broad as the earth. That is the key to the Dao of the heavens!”

Chen Yueshan landed next to Zhao Tianjiao, and although she was smiling as she looked at Bai Xiaochun, there was a hint of anger in her eyes. Clearly, Zhao Tianjiao had told her about all the things Bai Xiaochun had taught him.

Zhao Tianjiao’s two followers immediately bowed with great respect toward Bai Xiaochun, whom they didn’t dare to offend in any way. As for Chen Yueshan’s two friends, they merely sized him up curiously.

When Chen Yueshan spoke, her voice was soft and pleasant, “Junior Brother Bai, we were just about to leave, but Elder Brother Zhao was worried about you, so we came back to look for you. We were planning to go exploring a bit as well, and it’s always safer to travel in numbers, so why don’t you join us?”

Bai Xiaochun very much liked what he was hearing. Zhao Tianjiao laughed and grabbed his arm, leaving Bai Xiaochun incapable of refusing no matter how much he tried. With that, the group shot up into the air and left East Sea City.

As soon as they left the city, Bai Xiaochun could tell that there was a difference in the spiritual energy, but it wasn't very noticeable. After all, they were still very close to the Heavenspan Sea.

What was noticeable was that the hard-packed soil outside the city was a blackish violet color. It almost looked like it was suffused with countless volumes of blood, making it very sinister in appearance.

They also saw many craters, one of which had turned into a lake filled with black liquid.

Chen Yueshan looked around at the blackish violet lands and said, "My father told me that from the time the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was founded until now, the Great Wall has only been breached once. A huge army of Wildlands savages invaded, and the resulting slaughter caused rivers of blood to flow through the lands...."

Bai Xiaochun already felt a bit uneasy. In addition to the odd-looking soil, there were also strange and terrifying flora and fauna. There were 25-meter-tall trees that, instead of foliage, had huge human heads growing at their tops. Any small creatures who happened to pass by the sinister-looking trees would instantly be gobbled up.

At one point they happened to see a cloud of black, cottony seeds floating into the air off of a willow tree. When Zhao Tianjiao saw that, his expression flickered.

"Let's take the long way around," he said. "Those are the larvae of bloodsoul ticks! If they get into your skin, they'll burrow into your body and start feasting on your blood and soul! The only thing that can stop them are city-level spell formations! We would be powerless to defend ourselves!"

Bai Xiaochun opened his third eye and instantly confirmed that they were indeed not floating seeds, but rather, densely packed

insect larvae.

Everyone was shaken, and quickly fled in the opposite direction. It took them a few days to pass by the area, and despite having avoided the tick larvae, Bai Xiaochun was still trembling in shock. Along their way avoiding the larvae, they had passed what at first appeared to be a pile of rotting bones, but was actually a flock of undead birds which stunk like carrion, and were indescribably ferocious-looking. Just as the flock of undead birds seemed to notice the group of cultivators, and was preparing to attack them, a crevice opened up in the seemingly empty ground beneath them. A powerful gravitational force erupted out, and the entire flock of undead birds was sucked into the crevice. As the crevice closed up, crunching and cracking sounds filled the air.

By that point, Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding, and his face was as ashen as death.

Chapter 463: World City

“And we're still inside the Great Wall....” Bai Xiaochun thought. Everything he had seen so far was giving him a much clearer understanding of this area.

“If things are like this inside the Great Wall, then... what is it like on the outside?” The truth was that he didn't even want to know the answer to that question. The group flew along for quite a while, passing through three teleportation stations. Eventually, they were getting close to the halfway point across the area that was inside of the Great Wall.

That was the location of World City.

They had faced dangerous situations along the way, but nothing they couldn't handle. After all, the lands between East Sea City and World City were relatively safe.

Occasionally, they saw other cultivators, most of whom traveled in groups of between three to five. Very rarely did they ever encounter someone alone, and when they did, they were people with cold faces and vigilant expressions, who gave Bai Xiaochun's group a wide berth.

There was also an exhaustion visible in their eyes that caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to grow even colder than before.

“This place is even more crazily dangerous than I thought it would be....” he thought, heart pounding. The closer they got to World City, the more such feelings within him intensified.

Time passed. As they got closer to World City, Bai Xiaochun realized that the soil around them was growing blacker, and the vegetation was becoming even more bizarre. Even the birds and the beasts were growing stranger, and more and more black in color.

Besides all of that, the most telling change that Bai Xiaochun

could sense was the spiritual energy, which was getting weaker and weaker. Zhao Tianjiao and the others in the group had a hard time adjusting to it, but it wasn't as bad for Bai Xiaochun. At the moment, the spiritual energy levels were about the same as they were back in the Lower Reaches.

To people who were only used to the spiritual energy in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, it was a huge difference, but Bai Xiaochun didn't find it very shocking.

A few more days went by and, at long last, they reached the second of the three cities, World City!

It was different than East Sea City, enormous, like a gigantic cube made from black bricks. Black light shone out from it in all directions, and just barely visible on the walls were patrolling cultivators....

Enormous magical cannons that were clearly defensive weapons could be seen on the walls, and as for the enormous stone slabs that made the bricks, they were all inscribed with sealing marks, indicating that the entire city was itself a spell formation.

Although that spell formation was only partially active, it still kept the city perpetually sealed. This was the second major line of defense inside the Great Wall!

If Great Wall City ever fell, then this place... would serve as its replacement. There were many cultivators in the city, and the resources available were plentiful beyond belief. The truth was that, in addition to acting as a backup defense location, this place existed as a supply depot for Great Wall City!

In the dim light of evening, World City looked like a hulking beast, sinister and predatory. It was the type of place that would leave someone shaken even looking at it from a distance, as if it had its own murderous aura!

"That's World City up ahead," Zhao Tianjiao said. "We'll rest up

a bit here and then begin the second leg of the journey. We will definitely be facing some dangerous situations on the second part of the journey, so all of you need to prepare mentally.” The faces of the others in the group were extremely somber, and as for Bai Xiaochun, he was wailing inwardly.

There were bones scattered about outside of the city, some of which were bleached by the sun and had clearly been laying there for a very long time. The entire area seemed very wild and desolate.

Bai Xiaochun could tell that many of the bones were clearly not those of cultivators, and yet, were not beast bones either. They seemed humanoid, but much thicker and longer, as if they belonged to giants of some sort.

Such bones were very resilient, and even among those which were scattered about, almost none were broken.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart started pounding at the implication.

“Don’t tell me that those are the bones of Wildlands savages from beyond the wall?” he thought.

When Zhao Tianjiao noticed Bai Xiaochun looking at the bones, he said, “When the Great Wall was breached, World City... was besieged. Although it happened a long time ago, these bones were intentionally left out in the open so everyone would understand the brutality of war!

“We cultivators pursue our Dao, but at the same time, we have to defend our sect, and the world around us! We can't let the Wildlanders through to the Heavenspan Sea!” With that, he and Chen Yueshan flew along toward World City.

Zhao Tianjiao’s followers and Chen Yueshan’s friends went too, leaving Bai Xiaochun to be the last to catch up.

“What’s with all the fighting and killing...?” he thought. “Ah, whatever. Now that I’ve seen for myself how dangerous this place

is, I have to agree with Du Lingfei. I need to find a place to hole up for ten years, then I can trade one of my deva souls for some deva beast souls.”

Having made his decision, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and hurried forward, keeping a somber look on his face. Although he was inwardly terrified, he obviously wouldn't let such feelings show.

Quickly catching up to Zhao Tianjiao, he declared, “You're absolutely right, Elder Brother Zhao! We cultivators have to put our lives on the line to fight the Wildlanders!”

Zhao Tianjiao laughed heartily in response. Soon, they arrived outside the city gates, where their identity medallions were examined before they were allowed inside.

World City seemed large on the outside, but after entering, it seemed even larger. The streets were packed with cultivators going this way and that, and yet, there was no din of conversation, almost as if no one wanted to speak out loud.

Bai Xiaochun could tell that resources were definitely abundant in World City. Whether it was medicinal pills, magical items, or paper talismans, goods were available everywhere. Furthermore, the prices weren't too outrageous. In fact, many of the medicinal pills were cheaper here than they would be in other places.

Another thing that stood out to Bai Xiaochun was the garrison in the city!!

It was packed with cultivators, all of whom radiated murderous auras, and also wore unique clothing that was decorated with a blood-colored hand!

That hand pulsed with the power of a spell formation that made each and every one of those cultivators seem like the type of person who had climbed mountains of corpses and swam through seas of blood. Whenever cultivators from the garrison went out

into the city, everyone else treated them with the utmost respect.

“Those cultivators are members of the Hall of Steel Veins,” Zhao Tianjiao explained, “but they’re different from their compatriots in Great Wall City. These people only go beyond the walls to fight occasionally. Most of the time, they’re on guard here in World City.” When Zhao Tianjiao looked at the cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins, his eyes shone with respect and anticipation.

“They go beyond the walls occasionally?” When Bai Xiaochun thought about the fact that these people only occasionally went beyond the wall, and yet seemed completely shocking, he couldn’t help but wonder... what the cultivators stationed in the third city were like.

As he wallowed in his anxiety, the group found an inn to stay at for the night. As for Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan, they went to visit the elders in the garrison; considering their status, that was a right that only they possessed among the group.

Zhao Tianjiao invited Bai Xiaochun to come along, but after some thought, Bai Xiaochun decided that he would explore the city instead.

Evening fell, and the sky turned dark. Despite that, World City was just as busy as it was during the day, and all the shops remained open. Bai Xiaochun walked along looking at the crowds and window shopping. The crowds were very quiet; even when people spoke, it was in a near-whisper.

It was a very strange environment, to say the least.

Chapter 464: Bones of Giants

Since everyone was either not talking, or talking in whispers, Bai Xiaochun decided that the best thing to do was follow the ancient wisdom of imitating the locals. Therefore, he tried to look as cold and aloof as possible, even a bit sinister, all in the hopes of blending into the crowd.

Before long, things didn't seem as strange as they had been. Bai Xiaochun felt like he was just like everyone else, and was soon strolling around happily. After a bit of time passed, he stopped in place and looked over at one particular nearby shop.

"Scattered Souls Pavilion?" After looking at the name of the shop, he peered inside, and saw that the walls were stacked with countless strange-looking bottles. There were also quite a few cultivators inside browsing through the bottles.

Curious, Bai Xiaochun turned, headed into the shop, and picked a bottle to look at. As soon as he saw what was inside, his eyes widened.

The bottle contained a mist that was at first tranquil and calm. However, as soon as he looked closely at it, the mist shrank down into the form of a face that glared out murderously at him.

It was the face of a young woman, viciously contorted into a ferocious expression. A moment after it formed, it banged into the side of the bottle as if it were trying to get at Bai Xiaochun! That face was none other than a vengeful soul!

It happened with no warning whatsoever, and Bai Xiaochun had been completely unprepared for such a reaction, so he couldn't hold back from letting out a yelp of surprise. Almost immediately, the surrounding cultivators looked over at him with frowns on their faces. Simultaneously, all of the other bottles in the shop began to tremble and vibrate as the mists inside of them turned into faces that looked at Bai Xiaochun with glaring eyes.

To see so many vengeful souls staring at him caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to tingle with fear. He could also hear strange noises that resembled a mixture of laughter and weeping.

There were even some voices that seemed to be singing. The sounds swirled and mixed together, seemingly boring all the way down into his soul.

“Release me!”

“Hey, big bro, remember me...? We know each other!”

“I've eaten plenty of little kids just like you throughout the years!”

“Hahaha, bwahahaha...!”

The voices grew louder and louder until they echoed in Bai Xiaochun's mind like thunder. At that point, a cold glow appeared in his eyes, and frigid qi began to swirl within him. His right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he unleashed the Undying Hex onto his own chest.

Instantly, all of the sound died away, and everything returned to normal. The vengeful souls in the bottles were still staring at him, but apparently, they could sense that they were incapable of affecting his mind, so they looked away and began to transform back into spheres of mist.

The other cultivators in the shop also began to look away and return to browsing the bottles.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and looked around, his gaze eventually coming to rest on a man in the corner of the shop. He was old, and wore a gray robe that matched the color of his hair. Hands clasped behind his back, he walked forward and smiled at Bai Xiaochun.

“You new here?” he asked quietly.

Bai Xiaochun nodded, a bit depressed as he realized that he was

pretty sure he now knew why the people here didn't like to talk much.

“In World City and the lands beyond it, you need to keep your voice down to avoid getting tangled up with vengeful souls. The best thing to do is transmit your voice with divine sense.

“There are far, far too many vengeful souls out there. Some of them you can see with your eyes, and some not. What you see in these bottles are none other than the souls of the dead. You see, both inside and outside of the Great Wall, souls are the most valuable resource. Whether it's for cultivation, concocting medicine, or making magical items, you have to use souls.” With another smile and a nod, the old man turned and walked away.

Bai Xiaochun offered his thanks, and then took a bit more time to look around at the souls. What he found was that Foundation Establishment level souls were the cheapest and most plentiful, with Core Formation souls being more expensive. He didn't see any belonging to Nascent Soul experts.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun left and melted back into the crowd. This time, he was even more careful than before as he walked along the moonlit streets. Eventually, he reached another shop that caused him to stop and stare.

Within that shop, they were selling... savages!

Just as the bones outside the city had indicated, the savages looked very much like cultivators, except bigger and taller. Most of them were three meters tall or more, and were extremely muscular.

The savages on display were packed into coffins, and had sealing marks on them rendering them immobile. There were both men and women, and each and every one of them had very impressive fleshly bodies.

As Bai Xiaochun approached, he was noticed by one of the

salesmen, a man with a Foundation Establishment cultivation base and a waxen face. After looking Bai Xiaochun up and down, he clasped hands respectfully and quietly said, “Senior, our Wildlander servants might not be the absolute best available in World City, but they’re definitely top-of-the-line.”

Bai Xiaochun looked curiously at the savages, and was shocked to find that they had teeth as sharp as wild animals.

“You see,” continued the salesman, “even down to their teeth and bones, their fleshly bodies are very powerful, making them excellent servants. Furthermore, they’ve been sealed with restrictive spells, so that you can control their life or death with a single thought.”

“They don’t look like Chen Manyao at all....” Bai Xiaochun thought curiously. He considered purchasing one, but in World City, the only currencies accepted were spirit stones and battle credit. Merit points were completely useless.

“They’re so incredibly expensive....” he thought.

Considering how many years the salesman had been working here, he could tell what Bai Xiaochun was thinking. Chuckling softly, he said, “Senior, I’m guessing you’re relatively new to World City. Let me explain: these savages aren’t really very expensive at all. Outside the Great Wall, in the cities inhabited by the savages themselves, captured Foundation Establishment cultivators sell for a price ten times as large as savages of a similar cultivation level!”

“What?” Bai Xiaochun said, a look of shock appearing on his face. “The savages sell cultivators out there?”

“Of course!” the salesman replied coolly. “To the savages, cultivators from inside the Great Wall are like the most nourishing type of food available. They don’t have spiritual energy out there, and inside of every cultivator is a spiritual sea. To them, cultivators... are like living spirit stones!”

Bai Xiaochun's scalp prickled with fear. The mere thought of being captured by savages outside the Great Wall, and then sucked dry like a spirit stone, left him trembling inside and out.

"This place is way too dangerous...." he thought. Looking quite displeased, he left the shop, and instead of exploring the city more, went back to the inn.

Before long, dawn arrived, and Zhao Tianjiao came looking for Bai Xiaochun. It was time to leave World City and head toward the Great Wall itself.

They moved slower than before. The spiritual energy was getting weaker, making traveling more strenuous, and increasing the amount of time it took to recover from exertion. Furthermore, this leg of the journey was clearly more dangerous than the previous one.

The lands were actually losing their black tinge, and were almost completely violet, as if they really had been soaked through-and-through with blood. It was the same with the water in the rivers. It was a completely shocking sight to Bai Xiaochun and the others in the group.

There were mountains here and there, all of them bare of vegetation, as well as the occasional abandoned village. There were also mobs of vengeful souls that flew about, which usually had at least a few dozen that were as powerful as the Core Formation level.

Thankfully, the vengeful souls weren't particularly aggressive. Generally speaking, they would just fly by without stopping. Even still, Zhao Tianjiao and the other kept a close eye on them, and obviously, Bai Xiaochun was even more cautious.

He kept his mouth sewn shut tight, refusing to utter even a peep. Only after the vengeful souls were completely out of sight would he let out a sigh of relief.

As they proceeded forward, they rarely saw any other cultivators. There were almost no signs of life in this barren wasteland, and even the flora and fauna were few and far between, and were the type that put everyone on guard.

Each plant or tree they encountered seemed stranger than the last, and more ferocious.

Bai Xiaochun even saw one huge tree that was literally running along the ground as it chased after a pitch-black, nine-meter-tall spiked leopard. After catching the creature, the tree devoured it alive.

At one point, an enormous, undead hand shot out of a ravine to grab a passing black eagle, which it crushed into a pulp as it extracted its blood....

The squishing sounds were enough to cause one's heart to prickle with shock!

Chapter 465: Wildlands Cloudgyre

The strange things they were seeing far surpassed anything they had seen during the first part of the journey. The trip from East Sea City to World City had been like a romp through the park compared to this. Although they had faced some tricky situations, overall, everything had gone quite smoothly.

The path from World City to Great Wall City was much more tempestuous. Whether it was the vegetation or the animals, everything was bizarre to the extreme, and of course, left Bai Xiaochun completely terrified. Even Zhao Tianjiao, with his incredible cultivation base and extraordinary courage, proceeded with extreme caution.

Chen Yueshan seemed a bit pale in the face, and the others in the group were shaken terribly on numerous occasions. Even the slightest breeze left them jumpy.

This was a very different world than the one they were used to. The spiritual energy was weak, leaving everyone feeling stifled. They even had to rely on magical devices and spirit stones to sustain flight.

As for the spiritual energy within their bodies, they didn't dare to use it. In fact, to prevent it from seeping out, Zhao Tianjiao magically sealed himself.

Everyone else took similar actions. Of course, Bai Xiaochun had taken such precautions much earlier....

Although sealing one's own body would slightly reduce one's spiritual senses, it would solve the problem of leaking spiritual energy. That was important in a place where spiritual energy was scarce, and one was essentially adrift alone, unconnected to heaven and earth.

That method was useful for solving the problem of spiritual

energy leakage, but did nothing to alleviate the danger. Whether it was because of the souls flying about, or the bizarre entities which inhabited these lands, they had to proceed with extreme caution.

Despite their carefulness, an incident occurred about two months after they left World City. They were all sitting cross-legged on the magical skiff that Zhao Tianjiao had purchased, when suddenly, a terrifying howl split the air.

The deafening cry pierced through the skiff's sealing shields to batter the minds of everyone onboard. Zhao Tianjiao's eyes opened, and Bai Xiaochun's heart trembled. Everyone looked up in the sky to see what appeared to be clouds converging together.

Within moments, they had taken the shape of an enormous beetle, fully 3,000 meters long, which quickly turned pitch black!

Clearly, this 3,000-meter-long pitch-black beetle was attempting to block their path, and its intense howls caused everything in the area to shake.

"A Wildlands cloudgyre!!" Chen Yueshan blurted. Zhao Tianjiao's face fell, and the others in the group seemed equally shaken.

"The origin of Wildlands cloudgyres are unclear," Zhao Tianjiao said, "and no one knows exactly how they form. If I remember correctly, they can pop up anywhere in the Wildlands, whether that's inside the Great Wall or outside!

"They have no predefined form, and can take almost any shape, even that of plants or vegetation. Clearly, this cloudgyre has taken the form of a beetle!

"Cloudgyres aren't really animals; they're a manifestation of the weather, and one this big will surely attract the attention of Great Wall City!"

Without any hesitation, he steered the flying skiff to the side in an attempt to avoid the black beetle. As the skiff veered off course,

an intense sensation of danger filled Bai Xiaochun, and his heart leapt up into his throat.

However, even as they tried to change directions, the 3,000-meter-long beetle stopped roaring and then looked over at them with a cold gaze.

That gaze in and of itself was enough to drive Bai Xiaochun wild with fear, and send his mind spinning. Everyone else was also sweating in fear.

Before anyone could react, the black beetle once again let out a deafening roar, then opened its mandibles....

Instantly, a gravitational force spread out, accompanied by thunderous rumblings and screaming winds. It was almost as if the black beetle's mandibles had become a black hole!

Everything began to shake, causing dust and pebbles to rise up into the air, and even distorting the clouds above. A nearby flock of vicious-looking birds screamed as they were sucked toward the beetle.

The ground was shaking so hard that a hill in the area was ripped off of the ground and began to spin toward the beetle.

Everyone's minds were being battered by waves of shock, and as they did their best to remain firmly attached to the skiff, their hair and garments whipped in the wind. If they weren't already being protected by the spiritual power of the vessel itself, they would have been pulled out into the air and ripped to shreds. In fact, the skiff was already twisting and distorting on the verge of breaking.

From high above, it looked like the black beetle was the center of an enormous vortex sucking in everything around it, even the trees!

Zhao Tianjiao, Bai Xiaochun and everyone else were extremely nervous, and didn't think for a moment about conserving spiritual energy. They immediately unleashed the full power of their

cultivation bases to power the skiff as it flew out of the vortex.

As the skiff struggled through the air, the spirit stones which had been placed into its power slots glittered with bright light, then turned dark and transformed into ash.

The spirit stones having been fully drained, and with the extra power from the cultivation bases of the entire group, the skiff seemed to roar with rage as it pulled out of the gravitational vortex and then shot off into the distance.

Behind them, the black beetle howled in rage, but didn't pursue them.

Bai Xiaochun sat there in taciturn silence, his mind a blank. All of his cultivation base power was being poured into the skiff, and it was the same with everyone else. Only after they had gone all out to flee, and were some distance away, did they slow the skiff and stop near a random mountain. There, they breathed long sighs of relief, and exchanged awkward glances that were tinged with lingering fear.

"That cloudgyre... was at least as powerful as the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage...."

"Cloudgyre...." Bai Xiaochun looked over his shoulder in the direction they had fled from. He felt like he had just barely made it out of that situation with his poor little life. If the flying skiff hadn't been able to rip free from the gravitation vortex, what would have happened...?

There was no answer to the question. In the Wildlands, cloudgyres didn't just cause problems for cultivator, but the savages as well. They were manifestations of the weather, not the power of humans, and nothing that entered their jaws ever came back out alive.

Therefore, no one really knew what happened to the things that they consumed....

“I can't believe that freakish thing even exists....” Bai Xiaochun said with a frown.

Trying to sound comforting, Zhao Tianjiao said, “With our command medallions... we should be mostly safe as long as we're careful. As long as we don't go beyond the Great Wall....”

Chen Yueshan was a bit ashen, but she nodded. The only thing they could do in this sparsely populated land was hope that the power of the command medallions truly would keep them safe. That was what they were designed to do, considering that they were disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

“You sure about that...?” Bai Xiaochun said, scowling on the verge of tears as he pulled out the command medallion. He already regretted coming along with Zhao Tianjiao to this place. It would have been a much better idea to stay holed up in East Sea City for ten years. Better and safer!

Evening was falling. Unfortunately, draining the spirit stones to gain a burst of speed had damaged the power slots on the skiff, and they couldn't use it anymore.

However, Zhao Tianjiao and his group had begun the journey well prepared. After a bit of rest, Chen Yueshan produced another flying skiff, which they set up with new spirit stones and then resumed their journey.

Along the way, they were even more cautious than before. They had wasted a lot of their own cultivation base power, and the spiritual energy of heaven and earth was very weak. Therefore, they had to use spirit stones to recover, a process which was long and difficult.

Two more months went by. During that time, they faced some dangerous situations, but passed through them all safely. Even still, the mental strain was growing.

Thankfully, the slow and steady recovering process of their

cultivation bases had pushed them close to their peak level. As a result, Bai Xiaochun felt a lot safer than before.

At one point, Zhao Tianjiao shook his head and said, “Even I still can't believe that things are so dangerous inside the Great Wall.... I wonder what it's like on the other side.

“Xiaochun, our main goal still hasn't changed. After we get to the Great Wall, we're going outside to get some experience. Are you going to join us?”

Bai Xiaochun looked out wistfully at the lands around them, and then shook his head.

“I don't think so,” he replied. “Um... I think I'll explore Great Wall City a bit. The better I get to know the city, the less trouble I'll have later on.”

Chapter 466: The Incredible Great Wall!

“Xiaochun,” Zhao Tianjiao said, his tone serious, “as you know, everyone participating in this ten-year-long trial has to go out on at least three missions beyond the wall. You can choose when to do that, but there is no way to get out of the responsibility. In other words... you have to go out of the Great Wall at some point!”

Zhao Tianjiao clasped his shoulder. “When the time comes, you’ll have to go, even if you don’t want to.... Otherwise, you’ll fail the final test, and won’t be able to go back to the sect.”

Bai Xiaochun’s heart trembled. The thought of going out three times on missions made the world seem like a much darker place. Although he had heard of that arrangement, he hadn’t give it much thought before, and had assumed it wouldn’t be anything worth worrying about. But after seeing the dangers on the journey so far, he realized that the slightest misstep could lead to him losing his poor little life. Then he contemplated going outside of the Great Wall on three different occasions, and couldn’t help but think that it was nothing less than a deadly trap....

However, he didn't let any of his fear show on his face. In fact, he even stuck his chin up, as if he didn’t care at all about the subject. “It’s only three times, right? Not a big deal at all. You don't need to remind me, Elder Brother Zhao, when the time comes, of course I’ll do what needs to be done.”

Zhao Tianjiao laughed loudly and smacked Bai Xiaochun’s shoulder. “Good! That's how Zhao Tianjiao’s Junior Brother Bai should act!

“Very well, I won’t go on and on about it. Based on our current speed, we should catch sight of the Great Wall itself within about half a month. That’s where we will part ways.... I hope that by the time we meet again, whether its inside the Great Wall or out, that both of us will have made names for ourselves!” With that, he took

out a flagon of alcohol, took a long drink, and then handed it to Bai Xiaochun. As of this moment, Zhao Tianjiao seemed tall and mighty, and absolutely impressive. Behind him, Chen Yueshan looked on with sparkling eyes.

Bai Xiaochun slapped his chest, took the flagon, and drank a big mouthful. Despite how grand he was trying to look, it was to his disappointment that he realized that Chen Yueshan and the others in the group all had eyes fixed on Zhao Tianjiao.

“Ahem,” he thought to himself. “Low profile. I’m the type who keeps a low profile....”

Half a month flew by. One morning, when the first rays of dawn were peeking out from the east, Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes and looked over at the horizon to see... something that looked almost like a mountain range. It was... the Great Wall!

The sight left Bai Xiaochun completely shaken, and was almost impossible to describe with words. The Great Wall was like a hulking dragon lying on the horizon, snaking back and forth for as far as the eye could see.

It was fully 6,000 meters tall, a barrier that completely separated the lands on either side, and completely prevented anything on the outside from getting in.

In addition to the physical structure of the wall, there was a black, shimmering shield of light that rose from the top of the wall into the heavens. With that shield in place, everything on the other side was completely sealed out!

The wall and the shield together created what seemed like an impassable barrier!

As for the wall itself, it wasn’t black, but violet.... Bai Xiaochun was even able to detect the reek of blood coming from it.... It was possible to imagine that, years in the past, the wall had actually been black, but over time, had been stained by the endless flow of

blood which ran down it!

The lands leading up to the wall were completely barren and devoid of life. There was a bleakness to the area that even seemed to affect the clouds above, staining them violent and spinning them into a wild vortex that emitted occasional rumbling sounds.

Red lightning danced in that vortex, almost like red dragons flitting about and roaring.

The wall was violet, and the shield was black. Each tile and brick that formed the wall emanated incredible pressure, and all of that together... created the ultimate division between the lands of Heavenspan and the Wildlands!

Currently visible atop the wall itself were over a hundred magical cannons, ferocious weapons that seemed mighty enough to destroy the heavens and extinguish the earth.

Right in the middle of the Great Wall was a city that was fully ten times larger than either East Sea City or World City. That city formed the gate which led into and out of the Great Wall!

Countless auras could be detected within that city, each and every one of which seemed to pulse with the blood of countless battles, and were suffused with complete and utter determination. Based on what Bai Xiaochun could sense, there were millions upon millions of such auras.

Furthermore, in addition to the numerous Nascent Soul auras, there was something else, something... that could shake heaven and earth, something powerful that it seemed to be a part of creation itself.

It was... a deva!!

Deva were rare, but there was one here. Furthermore, it was a deva that neither Bai Xiaochun nor Zhao Tianjiao were unfamiliar with. It was Chen Yueshan's father, three-eyed Chen Hetian, who had arrived in the city much earlier than them.

In the following years, he would be tasked with leading the defense against the Wildlands!

In the very middle of the city was a five-sided pagoda, a tower that stretched 30,000 meters into the sky. From the top of that tower, everything on either side of the Great Wall was clearly visible. The intense light which flickered inside of it was enough to shock anyone who laid eyes on it.

At the very top of the pagoda was a huge pearl fully 300 meters wide, inside of which was a mysterious, swirling mist that occasionally formed together into an eye with two pupils!

Anyone who that eye looked at would instantly begin to shake, as if the will of the heavens were focusing on them!

Even as Bai Xiaochun was looking at the tower in shock, Zhao Tianjiao whispered, “Starry Sky Pagoda!”

When Zhao Tianjiao looked at the pagoda, it was with utter fervor and deep respect.

“It's a holy object of our Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. The Starry Sky Pagoda. I heard that sealed inside of that pearl... is a true spirit!”

“True spirit!?” Bai Xiaochun said, a look of shock appearing on his face.

“Even I don't know what a true spirit really is. But my Master told me that with that true spirit in place, the Great Wall is no longer an inanimate object. Instead, it possesses a life force of its own.

“The pagoda not only possess all types of strange defensive powers, but also forms the heart of the Great Wall. All matters pertaining to battle credits and resource distribution are under the control of the pagoda.” Suddenly, Zhao Tianjiao took a deep breath and pointed his finger out.

“Xiaochun, look! Surrounding the Starry Sky Pagoda are the

banners of the five legions!”

Sure enough, five banners could be seen flapping in the wind, a dazzling and eye-catching sight that made it possible to distinguish the five legions of the army, even from a distance!

The five banners were all a different color, and all had different sigils. All of them were very unique, but one of them seemed to stand out in particular to Bai Xiaochun. The sigil on that banner depicted a Wildlands savage that had been skinned alive!

The sigil was extremely lifelike, and it was even possible to see the skinned savage howling from the pain. Bai Xiaochun was almost sure that he could hear a bloodcurdling scream when he looked at the banner.

“Those banners represent the five legions that make up the Hall of Steel Veins, each one of which has accomplished incredible things during the wars throughout the years. The five legions are the Skin Flayers, the Black Demons, the Bane Stars, the Savage Butcherers, and the Soul Slaughterers!

“The Skin Flayers!” Bai Xiaochun said with a gasp. For some reason, that name really caused his mind to tremble.

“Each legion has their own banner, which not only represents what they’ve accomplished in battle, but also demonstrates how incredible they are. See the Skin Flayers’ banner? I’ve heard that their legion is incredibly bloodthirsty. Whenever they march to battle, they skin their enemies alive. Their name alone causes the savages outside the Great Wall to tremble in fear!” From the way Zhao Tianjiao’s eyes glowed with reverence, it was obvious that he very much wanted to join one of the five legions.

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard. After seeing the five banners, he thought more than ever that he should keep his distance from them.

Zhao Tianjiao was almost breathless as he revealed everything he

knew. “Xiaochun, did you know that beyond the Great Wall, the savages have something called the Execution List? Once your name gets on that list, everyone in the Wildlands will do everything they can to kill you!

“The generals of the five legions are all in the top 10 of that list, the highest among them being the general of the Skin Flayers, Bai Lin. He has the same surname as you, and is highest on the list at sixth place, surpassed by only the devas!”

The more Bai Xiaochun learned about the Great Wall, the more dangerous and unsafe it seemed.

Chapter 467: The Skin Flayers

As the group neared Great Wall City, they reached a certain point where a rippling fluctuation appeared, surrounding them and locking them in place.

It was impossible to detect with the naked eye, and almost immediately surrounded them with indescribable restrictive power that made it almost impossible for them to move. Even Zhao Tianjiao suddenly lurched to a stop and couldn't move a muscle!

The same thing happened to Chen Yueshan, Bai Xiaochun, and the others in the group. All of them were suddenly as stiff as boards, completely incapable of movement.

Next, the rippling power used some unknown method to examine their identity medallions and confirm that the medallions belonged to them. Even Chen Yueshan, daughter of three-eyed Chen Hetian, was examined thoroughly.

After that, another fluctuation passed through them, and they could sense their souls being examined!

It only lasted for a moment, but even that short bit of time left Bai Xiaochun and the others all trembling as if they had just had a brush with death.

After all, they had just been immobilized and scanned with divine sense; if they had harbored any ill intentions at all, they would have been killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!

After the rigid examination, the fluctuations locking them in place slowly faded away, and they regained the ability to move. Expressions flickering, they continued on toward Great Wall City.

Moments before, when the small group was being stopped and inspected, a door had opened somewhere in Great Wall City, and a middle-aged cultivator had stepped out, clad in a black suit of armor. He emanated the fluctuations of the great circle of Core

Formation, as well as a bleakly murderous aura which grew more intense by the moment. The man took only four steps, and yet, that placed him right in front of the newly arrived group.

Even Zhao Tianjiao could sense that this man's murderous aura was unusual and unique.

When his eyes fell upon Chen Yueshan, he immediately clasped hands and bowed. "I am your humble servant, Colonel Li Hongming of the Skin Flayers.

"The inspection you underwent just now was merely protocol. Great Wall City's spell formation has a special function which strictly inspects every person who comes in. I hope you can forgive me for the unexpected inconvenience." From the way Li Hongming was speaking, it was clear that he didn't expect a response from any of them, but rather, wanted them to listen carefully.

"It is not permitted to tarry inside of Great Wall City, and in fact, the other trial-takers won't even be allowed inside. They can only pass in and out of the Great Wall via a side gate, and must take no more than the time it takes an incense stick to burn to do so.

"However, the deva patriarch passed down orders that your group would be allowed in the city, albeit for only a single day. After that, you must leave.... I've been tasked with overseeing your stay, and therefore, you are not allowed to leave my sight. Please do abide by that arrangement." With that, he turned and began to walk off.

When Bai Xiaochun examined Li Hongming, he could tell that the man's cultivation base was only a bit higher than his own, and yet, his murderous aura was vastly more intense. Furthermore, his eyes seemed to radiate a feeling of blood, as though he had killed too many souls to even count.

The fact that a person like that was a mere colonel in charge of a thousand soldiers left Bai Xiaochun even more shaken regarding

the five legions.

After a moment of silence, Zhao Tianjiao hurried after Li Hongming and asked, “Brother Li, why did the inspection from before even go as deep as our souls?”

Without even turning his head to look at Zhao Tianjiao, Li Hongming said, “One sixty-year-cycle ago, the vengeful souls outside the Great Wall devised a unique possession technique that allowed them to masquerade as cultivators. They used that technique to try to infiltrate Great Wall City and assassinate the generals. From that point on, we took precautions against such methods. Everyone who wants to enter the city must first undergo a soul inspection!”

Zhao Tianjiao nodded and didn't ask any further questions. Bai Xiaochun followed along cautiously with the rest of the group as Li Hongming led them into Great Wall City itself!

He could instantly tell that the place was different from East Sea City or World City. First of all... there were no shops anywhere to be seen. Although there were a lot of people present, most of them wore suits of armor, and had cold, expressionless faces.

This wasn't really a city, it was... a huge military base!

The cultivators were all members of the five legions, each of which had their own section of the city to themselves. There was a harsh, stern atmosphere that weighed down everywhere, leaving Bai Xiaochun and the rest of the group feeling somewhat unsettled.

Even Zhao Tianjiao was affected.

When Li Hongming saw the reactions of Bai Xiaochun and the others, a cold smile appeared on his face, and a bit of scorn could be seen in his eyes. He obviously didn't have a very good opinion of them, and were it not for the orders of the deva patriarch, he would never have lowered himself to the point of giving them a tour of the city.

As far as he was concerned, his current task was simply taking him away from fighting or cultivation.

“They’re nothing but a bunch of highfalutin kids from the sect, here to see what war looks like.” Although his heart was filled with scorn, he kept his face expressionless as he led them through Great Wall City.

Along the way, various cultivators from the five legions looked over at Li Hongming, and when they saw the type of armor he was wearing, would clasp hands and offer respectful greetings.

“Greetings, Colonel!”

“My respects, Colonel!”

Bai Xiaochun heard many such greetings being called out, and when he saw the looks of respect on the faces of the other cultivators, couldn’t help but be curious about the rank of colonel.

Zhao Tianjiao and the others were all wrapped up in their own thoughts as they looked around at the violet walls of the city.

Everything in the city was violet, including the buildings, and emanated a reek of blood.

“Great Wall City is divided into five districts, corresponding to the five legions. We are currently in the district assigned to the Skin Flayers, which is itself larger than all of World City.

“The Skin Flayers’ district is further subdivided into ten garrisons. As for that area over there... it belongs to General Bai Lin.” Li Hongming was currently pointing to an area with a vast, 300-meter-tall building that looked like a violet coffin.

The coffin was emblazoned with the sigil of the Skin Flayers, and emanated a very sinister air. As he looked around, Bai Xiaochun could see the looks of zealous devotion in the eyes of the cultivators when they looked at the huge coffin. It was the same even with Li Hongming.

“The other areas are similar, so I won't take you to look at all of them.” Having led them on a rather circuitous route through the city, Li Hongming finally took them into a rather ordinary-looking courtyard.

Li Hongming looked up at the noon sun and then coolly said, “It's getting late, so why don't you rest up a bit. There's a curfew at night, so remember that, and be careful.”

Bai Xiaochun looked up at the sun, and could tell that it was actually very early, and not anywhere close to night time. Li Hongming clearly didn't want to waste any more time showing them around.

“I'll escort you out tomorrow morning at first light.” With that, Li Hongming turned to leave.

Zhao Tianjiao was frowning, and seemed to be on the verge of saying something when Chen Yueshan took a step forward and said, “Brother Li, please wait a moment.”

Li Hongming stopped in place. If anyone else in the group had spoken up, he would have ignored them, but Chen Yueshan's status was different. Frowning slightly, he turned to look at her.

“Brother Li, would you mind taking us up to the Great Wall to look around?” she said lightly, giving voice the words that Zhao Tianjiao had just been thinking.

After a moment of silence, Li Hongming slowly said, “There's currently a battle going on, making it quite dangerous. If we go up, I can't guarantee your safety. Are you sure you want to go?”

“Yes, we're sure!” Zhao Tianjiao said, nodding his head.

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, but seeing how everyone else was nodding, he decided to go along. “We definitely want to go have a look!”

Li Hongming did nothing further to dissuade them. Turning in a different direction, he began to lead them toward the Great Wall

itself.

Chapter 468: Savage Giants!

It was some distance to the edge of the city where it connected to the wall. Even with Li Hongming leading them, it took the time it takes an incense stick to burn before they arrived.

As Bai Xiaochun stood there, looking up at the enormous wall, he felt so truly insignificant that it was suffocating.

Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan had the same feeling, as did the others in the group. The imposing pressure of the wall caused their hearts to race, their blood to boil, and their cultivation bases to spin rapidly.

Their reaction only served to increase Li Hongming's disdain.

"Alright, get onto the stairs. In a moment you'll get to feel what war is like." As soon as Li Hongming stepped onto the stairs, ripples spread out in all directions, revealing what appeared to be more than 10,000 steps leading up to the top of the wall!

Zhao Tianjiao immediately stepped forward, and Chen Yueshan followed, pausing briefly on the first step before hurrying after Li Hongming.

From where Bai Xiaochun was standing, he couldn't hear anything that was happening beyond the wall, but as soon as he stepped onto the stairs, he could instantly hear screaming and yelling. At the same time, his heart began to thump as if with the desire to do battle.

"Something's off!" he thought. After looking around for a moment, he quickly hurried after the others.

Soon, the stairs were blurring by beneath his feet, and the sounds of screaming and yelling were getting more intense. Before long, he had reached the final stair, and was on top of the wall. At that point, the sounds of battle rang loudly in his ears.

He could hear agonized screams, enraged roars, and maniacal

laughing, along with booms and rumbling that could shake lands and rock mountains.

The wall was so wide at the very top that a hundred people could patrol it in formation. And yet, it was still packed with cultivators, all of them wearing black suits of armor emblazoned with the sigil of the Skin Flayers, their murderous auras rising high into the heavens.

Some of them were operating the enormous magical cannons, sending destructive beams of light down into the area beyond the wall. Others were at the ramparts, unleashing magical techniques and powerful attacks.

There were some who had flown off the wall and were fighting the mist-like clouds that were hordes of vengeful souls.

The deafening sounds of battle instantly assailed Bai Xiaochun's mind, leaving him gasping in shock. However, he quickly recovered, and looked over to find Li Hongming staring at him in shock.

As it turned out, he was the first to regain his senses. Neither Zhao Tianjiao nor any of the others had recovered from the shocking sight of the field of battle.

Bai Xiaochun was the first of the group to recover, which was apparently quite a surprise to Li Hongming, who had been standing there with his arms crossed, looking at the small group. Throughout the years, he had seen many such trial-takers come to the Great Wall, and whenever they saw true battle for the first time, they always needed a bit of time to recover.

At the minimum, it usually took them several breaths of time to do so, and yet this nameless cultivator in front of him had only required a single breath of time. In fact, from the look of it, it might have been even slightly faster than that. Apparently, this young man was no stranger to war.

Of course, compared to Zhao Tianjiao and the others in the group, Bai Xiaochun had a lot more experience on the field of battle. Thanks to everything that had occurred in the Lower Reaches and the Middle Reaches, he was very familiar with large-scale conflicts.

However, despite his familiarity, it was still a shock to see all of the cultivators atop the wall fighting, and especially with the magical cannons. Furthermore, all of that quickly tore his attention to what was happening outside the wall!

Beyond the wall, the sky was crimson, as though it had been stained red by countless years of flame. Even the ground outside was bright red, a sharp contrast to the black soil inside the Great Wall.

Down below the wall were vast numbers of vengeful souls, their faces twisted into vicious expressions and they screamed and howled, doing everything in their power to try to destroy the wall itself.

They were the souls of men and women, old and young, all of them vicious beyond compare, and charging forward in tide-like waves of attack.

The number of souls was mind-boggling. Wherever Bai Xiaochun looked, he saw nothing but vengeful souls, whether it was on the ground or in the air. It was as if he were looking out at a massive sea of souls.

Some were attacking the black glowing shield, and others were gnashing and biting at the wall itself. Many were flying up and trying to attack the Skin Flayers who were out in the open.

Although the vengeful souls could attack and retreat at will, the black shield and the wall held strong against them.

For the Skin Flayers, things were different. Most of them were on the wall, and even if they did charge out into the open for an

offensive, they always had to return to the wall at some point, and rely on the protection of the shield to weaken the souls for a period before beginning another offensive.

In addition to the vengeful souls, there were occasionally giants visible within the enemy forces. Most of them were about three meters tall, and despite being physically imposing, seemed emaciated and sickly. Even still, they were crazed, bloodthirsty and completely vicious, and their eyes radiated with unfathomable hatred whenever they looked in the direction of the Great Wall.

Bai Xiaochun instantly recognized those giants; they were none other than Wildlands savages!

Most of them held back, looking for opportunities created by the sea of souls. Once such an opportunity presented itself, they would call upon their fleshly body power to rocket through the air like meteors.

The attacks of the savages were what the Skin Flayers on the Great Wall would get most nervous about. Whenever they happened, the cultivators would fly off of the wall to counter-attack with full force!

Rumbling booms filled the air, and crimson blood and gore filled the battlefield as the bitter fighting went on. Even as Bai Xiaochun looked around to take everything in, the savages outside seemed to take notice of him. They could tell that he and his group were new arrivals, and one of them, who happened to be a bit larger than the others, suddenly launched himself into the air toward them.

Howling, he sped along in a beam of light, simultaneously performing a double-handed incantation gesture, which caused numerous vengeful souls to join him in his charge!

In the blink of an eye, Bai Xiaochun saw blackened, yellowish teeth and an emaciated body hurdling madly in his direction!

Li Hongming's pupils constricted, and he strode forward, right

hand flashing in an incantation gesture before waving his finger in the direction of the savage. At the same time, numerous nearby Skin Flayers also began to charge forward.

To see the savage staring at him in such bloodthirsty fashion caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to prickle in fear. And yet, the more danger he was in, the more explosively he would react. Having no time to considering the situation, he opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, causing a violet beam of light to shoot out.

The violet light almost instantly landed on the savage, wrapping around him. The effect only lasted for a moment before he freed himself, but within that time, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture, causing shocking frigid qi to roil out. Cracking sounds could instantly be heard as layers of ice sprang up around the attacking savage.

Simultaneously, Li Hongming and the other soldiers attacked, causing booming sounds to echo out in all directions. That was when Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan recovered. Expressions flickering, they also joined in the attack.

Amidst the rumbling sounds, the savage let out a miserable shriek, and was torn to shreds. Black blood burst out in all directions, but was too far away from the wall and the shield to hit them. Instead, it splashed down onto the ground below, where it hissed and sizzled as it dissolved the soil.

“The savages' blood is filled with various toxins,” Li Hongming explained, “and is strong enough to erode the wall itself. It's a new development from within the last hundred years, and is why we can't let the savages even get close to the Great Wall.” From the look in his eyes, the disdain he had felt toward Bai Xiaochun seemed to have lessened significantly.

Chapter 469: Necromancers!

Bai Xiaochun looked down wide-eyed at the crater which had been melted by the savage's blood, and his heart trembled.

"They're not savages," he thought, "they're more like pill furnaces on the verge of exploding.... I can't believe that's what happens when you kill them...."

Despite the fact that he was even more nervous than ever, he could tell that Li Hongming was looking at him differently than before, so he forced his chin up and coolly said, "It's been quite some time that I've hoped to feast my eyes on fighting like this. Presumably, battles like this don't happen very often."

Li Hongming's derision for Bai Xiaochun was continuing to lessen, so he smiled and explained, "Of course they do! Small-scale skirmishes like this happen every two or three days."

Bai Xiaochun would rather have not heard such an explanation, and his heart immediately began to thump. Looking out beyond the wall, he saw a sea of souls, the countless savages, and even certain locations where there were huge, ferocious battle beasts.

"This is a small-scale skirmish?" he thought in surprise. "What are the big battles like?" Not only did everything look very dangerous, but it reminded him that he had to go outside of the Great Wall on at least three missions. What a headache!

Smiling faintly, Li Hongming looked at Zhao Tianjiao and the others and said, "Very well, it's dangerous here on top of the wall. Now that you've had your look at war, why don't we head back down?"

Bai Xiaochun was just about to agree when Zhao Tianjiao took a deep breath. Eyes sparkling, he looked down at the fighting and said, "Brother Li, how long will this battle last?"

Li Hongming looked around for a moment to assess the situation,

then replied, "From the look of things, I'd say the soul tide will recede tonight. Then there will be a day or two of peace and quiet."

"In that case, I'll wait here. Once the battle is over... I'd like to immediately go out into the Wildlands to begin my training!"

Bai Xiaochun had known all along that Zhao Tianjiao would think in this way, and wasn't surprised at all.

However, Li Hongming seemed quite taken aback. "You want to go outside of the Great Wall?"

"That's why I came here. To go out into the Wildlands!"

Li Hongming looked at Zhao Tianjiao a bit more closely for a moment before clasping hands and bowing deeply. "In all the years I've been stationed here in Great Wall City, I can't count how many people have gone out into the Wildlands, never to return. Fellow Daoist Zhao, the fact that you have such a goal despite your incredible status is truly worthy of respect. I truly hope that your journeys are safe, Fellow Daoist."

Zhao Tianjiao laughed heartily, then looked over at Chen Yueshan.

Placing her hand over her mouth to cover her smile, she walked over without a word to stand at Zhao Tianjiao's side. Her message was clear; she would stay with Zhao Tianjiao wherever he went. It might be dangerous on the outside, and she might have a reputation as being one of the most beloved young women in the sect, but at the moment, those things didn't matter to her.

As for Zhao Tianjiao's two followers, and Chen Yueshan's two close friends, none of them said anything. Originally, they had planned to go along with Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan, but after seeing the deadly fighting just now, they were left so shaken that they could only look down at the ground in an attempt to hide the shame on their faces.

Zhao Tianjiao didn't seem to care. Smiling broadly, he looked at

Bai Xiaochun. “Xiaochun, will you be joining us?”

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. Considering that he was only in the late Gold Core stage, he didn’t feel that going out into the Wildlands would be a very good idea.

Perhaps once he reached the great circle, then he would go out. At least at that point, he would be more capable of defending himself. By then, he could just make a quick trip outside and back, and hopefully, wouldn’t find himself in too much danger.

By enduring the next ten years in such a fashion, he could then go back to the sect and trade his deva soul for a set of five elements deva beast souls. Taking the safe and easy route to the Nascent Soul stage was the way for him.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun felt more confident in his decision than ever, and was just trying to decide whether or not to explain his decision, when suddenly, cries of shock could be heard from the surrounding Skin Flayers.

Many faces in the area filled with astonishment, and despite the fact that the spiritual energy was so weak, many people unleashed the power of their cultivation bases.

The sudden development left Bai Xiaochun, Zhao Tianjiao and everyone else stunned. Looking out at the battlefield, they saw that the seemingly endless tide of souls had suddenly stopped moving.

In fact, they even began to back up. At the same time, there were no vicious expressions on their faces anymore, but rather, what appeared to be flickers of intelligence. It was a very odd-looking sight; such expressions seemed very out of place.

If that were all there were to the situation, it might not have been a big deal. But then, the vengeful souls threw their heads back and let out ear-piercing howls, and at the same time began to rush toward each other and clump into groups.

In the blink of an eye, more than ten 300-meter-tall soul

emperors had formed on the battlefield. They had broad shoulders and seemingly muscular bodies made up of countless souls, and each one of them wielded different magical weapons. The mere sight of them was enough to shake heaven and earth.

The more than ten enormous soul emperors let out terrifying howls as they brandished their magical weapons in shocking fashion.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide at the sight of the soul emperors, and he couldn't help but think of the soul emperor he had seen in the cyan trial by fire back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

That soul emperor there looked almost exactly like these ones!!

"This... this...." The terrifying soul emperors out on the battlefield seemed incredibly powerful, almost as if they were comparable to... Nascent Soul experts!

In addition to the more than ten soul emperors, Bai Xiaochun could also see... that there were certain souls out on the battlefield that were different from the others!

The ordinary vengeful souls weren't intelligent, and couldn't use magical items. For the most part, they acted on instinct, and were mostly illusory, like smoke. But now, seven or eight figures could be seen on the battlefield, clad in voluminous black robes complete with deep hoods that obscured their heads and faces.

It was impossible to say when they had appeared, but now they hovered in midair, surrounded by crackling black lightning.

There were also some vengeful souls that were beast-like in appearance, and held enormous weapons in their hands as they strode forward.

In addition, at one point off in the distance, swirling smoke formed into the shape of a warhorse with blood-red eyes and flames surrounding its hooves.

Seated on the back of the warhorse of smoke was a gray-robed

man!

Clearly, that man was no vengeful spirit, and neither was he a savage. He was... a cultivator!! Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he was like a cultivator. He was tall and thin, and the skin of the hand which held the reins of the horse was pure white and seemingly devoid of any dirt or filth whatsoever.

There was something elegant about him, something that made him seem beyond ordinary. Furthermore, he wasn't alone. Flanking him were seven or eight men and women wearing dilapidated clothing, yet who were very good-looking. As they stood there staring at the Great Wall, eyes flickering coldly, the cultivation base fluctuations rolling off of them placed them in the Core Formation stage.

Immediately, the nearby emaciated savages bowed their heads and clasped hands, expressions of awe and reverence on their faces.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the black warhorse, the first thing he thought of was Bruiser. Then he looked more closely at the figure in the gray robe mounted atop it, and realized that there was definitely something different about him.

He almost seemed like a king to the vengeful souls and the savages, as if he could single-handedly control all of them.... For some reason, Bai Xiaochun found himself thinking about Chen Manyao and the group she represented.

When Li Hongming saw the gray-robed figure, his expression flickered.

“Who would have thought that a small-scale skirmish like this would see the appearance of... soul cultivators and necromancers!!”

Zhao Tianjiao stared at the gray-robed man, coldness rising up in his heart as he asked, “Soul cultivators? Necromancers?”

“In the Wildlands,” Li Hongming said in a low voice, “vengeful souls are considered to be the lowest ranking and least powerful of all entities. Then come the savages, and after that, the soul cultivators. At the top... are the necromancers! As for the soul cultivators, they are powerful cultivators who treat the savages like nothing more than servants. There is no spiritual energy for them to cultivate, so they settle for the next best thing. They use soul vitality instead of spiritual power, and that is why they are called soul cultivators!

“The people responsible for capturing the most powerful vengeful souls, the masters of soul manipulation techniques, and the ones who extract soul vitality for the soul cultivators to use, are rare in the Wildlands, and are highly valued. They are the necromancers!

“Necromancers are terrifying beings. Each and every one is a powerful expert who can control souls, merge them together, and even contain souls inside their bodies to be unleashed with devastating power!”

Chapter 470: Who Said I'm Scared?

Even as Li Hongming was explaining about soul cultivators and necromancers, the gray-robed man on the black warhorse extended his right hand and pointed at the Great Wall. In response, the more than ten gigantic soul emperors roared and began to charge across the battlefield, followed by the numerous battle beasts in the area.

Of course, not all of the vengeful souls on the field of battle had been used to make the soul emperors, so there were plenty of ordinary vengeful souls to accompany them in their charge.

There were also the pitch-black souls in midair, surrounded by black lightning, and the souls with special magical weapons. As the charge began, intense rumblings echoed out that were enough to topple mountains and drain seas.

The savages also howled as they began to run toward the Great Wall, with only the gray-robed man and the seven or eight soul cultivators remaining unmoving as they watched the scene play out.

The battle was ramping up, and deafening rumbling sounds were already filling the air. As for Zhao Tianjiao, he stood looking out at the battle, listening intently to Li Hongming's explanation. Although Zhao Tianjiao knew quite a bit about the Wildlands, Li Hongming had personally been here fighting battles for many years, so clearly, his understanding was much deeper and clearer.

Bai Xiaochun stood there licking his lips as he looked at the soul cultivators and the gray-robed man. He had a bit of a different perspective than Zhao Tianjiao; he had been dealing with the Wildlands for a long time now, and was very glad to have this additional information from Li Hongming.

"Neither the vengeful souls nor the savages are the true rulers of the Wildlands," he thought. "The real ones in charge are the so-

called rebels who have been forced to live out there!

“Originally, there probably weren’t very many of them, but after all the years that have passed, they’ve multiplied and become many. Considering how barren the place is, they have no choice but to use soul vitality to practice cultivation. And that’s why they’re called soul cultivators.

“The necromancers must just be outstanding figures among soul cultivators. He said they’re adept at manipulating souls, so I wonder if the process is similar to how medicine is concocted or magical items are forged?” Even as Bai Xiaochun was wrapped up in these thoughts, Chen Yueshan frowned. [1. Footnote: A quick note that “necromancer” has a Chinese character in it that is relatively common in AWE and in xianxia stories in general, and that is 炼. You will often see this character translated as “refine” because that is the most common dictionary definition for the character on its own. However, when combined with other words, that “refine” character doesn’t necessarily mean refine. For example, 炼丹 is literally “refine pill” but is a real-world Daoist term that means to concoct or make pills of immortality. That’s why I translate 炼丹 as pill concocting. In AWE, the terminology (in Chinese) is slightly different, so we have medicine concocting instead of pill concocting, with the verb being the same, but the noun part changing from the “pill” character to the “medicine” character. Anyway, I digress.

If you remember way back in chapter 4 of AWE, there was a line that talks about the main skills relevant to immortal cultivation, those being medicine concocting, equipment forging, and spirit enhancement. All of those terms use the character 炼 as the verb. I chose early on not to try to have all those verbs match, since the former two were holdovers from ISSTH, and clearly should not use the “refine” definition. Furthermore, I felt that spirit “enhancement” was a more accurate description of that skill. In the case of the necromancers, we find that same Chinese character

used again. As for what exactly it means (refine/concoct/forge/use/manipulate souls), you can't tell from the context. In any case, they practice some sort of technique/skill/magic that has to do with souls.]

“Even if soul cultivators are strong, and necromancers are rare, what are they doing here? What gives them the courage to take on the entire Great Wall with just that small group? Aren't they worried that we will charge out and kill them?!”

Chen Yueshan wasn't the only one pondering that very question. Zhao Tianjiao had also been thinking about it. Even Bai Xiaochun looked over expectantly at Li Hongming.

Li Hongming didn't respond. Instead, he extended his right hand, within which appeared a jade slip that he apparently used to transmit some orders. Next, ten enormous magical cannons suddenly began to power up on the Great Wall, sending powerful fluctuations out in all directions. Moments later, rumbling sounds could be heard as bright beams of light shot out from the cannons out onto the battlefield.

The air distorted around the beams of light as they shot toward the soul emperors, some of whom let out miserable shrieks as they were destroyed. The beams of light cut through them like a hot knife through butter, and then proceeded onward to destroy more savages and souls behind them. In an instant, the light was closing in on the necromancer.

Those ten beams of light were powerful enough to destroy Nascent Soul cultivators, and yet, when they hit the necromancer and the soul cultivators, their bodies simply faded away.

Obviously, they hadn't been killed, but rather, had visited the battlefield via projection, and not with their true forms!

Chen Yueshan's jaw dropped, and Zhao Tianjiao's pupils constricted. Even Bai Xiaochun was completely taken aback.

Apparently, Li Hongming wasn't at all surprised by Chen Yueshan's question, and had even been expecting it. "Back when I first arrived at the Great Wall, I had similar questions. Unfortunately, no one provided me with any answers, and I only learned the truth after seeing things with my own eyes." Turning to face her, he said, "I suspect you don't know as much about the Wildlands as you think you do."

"The Wildlands are huge, much larger than the Heavenspan River that we come from. The vengeful souls there are so numerous that they are without end. For countless tens upon tens of thousands of years, the savages there have been born with the power of gods running in their veins. After they grow up, some of them become giants that are thousands of meters tall!

"There are also countless vicious beasts in the Wildlands, the type that would shock you to hear them described. Remember, it's not just the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect who resists the Wildlands, it's all of the sects in the Heavenspan River basin!

"Furthermore, we aren't the only ones who have devas! Nor are we the only ones to have demigods!"

As Li Hongming continued with his explanation, Bai Xiaochun looked out at the spot where the necromancer and the soul cultivators had been standing, as well as the terrifying battle which was playing out.

Even as he was sighing and cursing about ending up in a place like this, Zhao Tianjiao threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

"If the Wildlands were filled with weaklings, then what would be the point of going there for training? The lands out there are filled with crouching tigers and hidden dragons, which make them the perfect place for me! Besides, the Wildlands might be strong, with even devas and demigods, but we have the Celestial!

"With the Celestial on our side, the Wildlands will be the

Wildlands for all eternity. They will always be stuck outside the Great Wall, and will never pollute our Heavenspan Sea!” Zhao Tianjiao seemed very grand as he stood there and uttered such words, so much so that Li Hongming also joined him in laughing.

“That’s right. We have the Celestial, so the Wildlands will always and ever be stuck on the outside. That’s how things have always been!” A strong gleam of approval could be seen in Li Hongming’s eyes as he looked at Zhao Tianjiao.

As the two of them laughed together, Zhao Tianjiao looked over at Bai Xiaochun, and could see that he was nervous.

“Xiaochun, does it scare you to see all those souls and hear about how strong the Wildlands are? Cultivation is fundamentally a defiance of the heavens, so we cultivators should obviously dominate the battlefield to carve out our own great Dao!”

When faced with the heroic-looking Zhao Tianjiao and Li Hongming, Bai Xiaochun knew that he couldn’t let himself look scared. Glaring at them, he slapped his chest hard and loudly declared, “Scared? Who said I’m scared? I could destroy those puny souls as easy as turning over my hand!”

Looking out at the tide of souls and the soul emperors, Bai Xiaochun decided to make his words even more persuasive, and to truly convince them that he wasn’t afraid. Therefore, he had to take some action. Slapping his bag of holding, he produced a Soul Convergence Pill...

Looking disdainfully down at the battlefield, he threw the pill out.

“Take this!”

As the medicinal pill flew through the air, he performed an incantation gesture and then waved his finger at it.

As he did, the pill landed amidst the sea of souls, and then exploded!

Instantly, a terrifying gravitational force erupted out, becoming a black hole fully 300 meters wide.

All of the souls in that area were in the middle of howling and charging toward the Great Wall. However, in the blink of an eye, their howls were cut short. Meanwhile, expressions of wide-eyed astonishment suddenly appeared on the faces of the Skin Flayers up on the wall.

Within that 300-meter area, all of the vengeful souls were suddenly sucked beyond their control in the direction of the exploded pill, and in the blink of an eye, the entire area was empty!

From a distance, there was now a large, 300-meter hole in the middle of the soul tide, something completely eye-catching that everyone was looking at.

To the astonishment of everyone, after the souls were sucked together, they became a head-sized soul sphere that dropped down onto the ground. From the look of it, there were over 10,000 vengeful souls inside of it, all screaming and struggling to no avail to free themselves.

Not only were the cultivators on the Great Wall shocked, the savages on the battlefield were completely astounded. There were also many nearby vengeful souls who instinctively stopped in place and looked over.

Even some of the soul emperors looked over in surprise.

“This... this....” Li Hongming said, his mind spinning. Earlier, he had assumed that Bai Xiaochun was pulling out a medicinal pill simply to get some face, but what had actually resulted left him completely and utterly shocked.

Zhao Tianjiao’s eyes were wide as he looked at the newly-emptied 300-meter circle in the middle of the battlefield, and the more than 10,000 vengeful souls struggling in the soul sphere. Gasping, he turned to look at Bai Xiaochun, his expression one of slight

confusion.

Chen Yueshan, as well as the others in their group, were standing there with hearts pounding as they suddenly remembered Bai Xiaochun's actions in the cyan trial by fire back in the sect.

After a moment of silence, the Skin Flayers on the wall erupted into chaos, their eyes shining with disbelief and shock as they looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

“Heavens! What just happened!?”

“What... what magical item did he throw out just now!?!?”

“This is unheard-of! I can't believe this! I don't think I've ever seen anything that works so well against vengeful souls!!”

“Who is that guy!?!?”

Seeing that not only had his pill worked quite well, but he had also attracted quite a bit of attention, Bai Xiaochun was immediately enlivened. Therefore, he pulled out a whole pile of Soul Convergence Pills and, with a mighty shout, threw them out over the wall, and then began to perform an incantation gesture.

Booms began to ring out on the battlefield, and soon, vast numbers of vengeful souls were screaming in anguish. Even one of the soul emperors was caught up, and ended up being sucked away into a soul sphere....

The crowd of cultivators on top of the wall stood there in stunned silence.

Bai Xiaochun was more excited than ever by this development. Clearing his throat, he happily stuck his chin up and waved his sleeve.

“Who said I was scared? With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun reduced all those souls to ashes! You think I'm scared of them?”

Chapter 471: Do You Really Want To Join the Skin Flayers?

"Bai Xiaochun? Scared?" Feeling very pleased with himself, Bai Xiaochun tried as much as possible to flaunt his veins of steel, as if the slightest word of provocation would cause him to throw all caution to the wind and fight it out to the death with his enemies.

The shocking result of him throwing out so many Soul Convergence Pills led to more silence as virtually all of the Skin Flayers on top of the wall looked over at Bai Xiaochun, their jaws hanging open and their eyes shining with ardor.

Even Zhao Tianjiao could barely breathe. His words earlier had been casually spoken, and he had never imagined that Bai Xiaochun would react the way he did. With the mere wave of his hand, he eradicated a huge number of vengeful souls.

He wasn't the only one. In addition to the Skin Flayers in the area, someone had been watching unseen from the huge coffin off in the distance. That gaze seemed to be completely fixed on Bai Xiaochun for a long moment before retracting back into the coffin.

"I've gone through just about everything you can imagine," Bai Xiaochun declared. "Back when the Spirit Stream Sect and the Blood Stream Sect were about to go to war, I was the one who single-handedly stopped it. After the sects joined forces, we went on to subjugate the entire cultivation world of the Lower Reaches!" Looking off into the distance, he tried to look as heroic as possible.

"Later on, I charged into battle with a million other cultivators, including those from the Pill and Profound Stream Divisions. In fact, I was the one who came up with the name of the River-Defying Sect!" As he swished his sleeve, the wind blew his hair, making him seem even more impressive than before.

"When the River-Defying Sect fought the Sky River Court, I led

the charge, cutting down countless enemies. I even took control of the body of the Blood Ancestor to fight the Sky River Court's reserve power, the Dire Skybanyan!

“Fellow Daoist Li, now do you understand why I wasn't very shocked by the sight of the battlefield earlier? On my path of cultivation... I've already experienced far too many wars.” There was a tenacity visible in Bai Xiaochun's expression, and something in his eyes that seemed both profound and ancient.

Because of that, he seemed more than ever like he had veins of steel, and lacked any fear of death. Anyone who saw him at this moment would be shocked, and even Li Hongming was panting a bit.

These weren't stupid people; none of them knew Bai Xiaochun, and since this was their first time meeting him, he seemed completely and utterly impressive. Plus, his Soul Convergence Pill truly had shaken the entire battlefield, and left everyone's minds spinning.

On the battlefield beyond the Great Wall, the savages were trembling in fear, and none of them even dared to advance. As for the remaining vengeful souls, they were already backing up.

“Xiaochun, Elder Brother really misjudged you!” Zhao Tianjiao said, sounding a bit self-reproaching. Thinking back to everything that had occurred since he had met Bai Xiaochun, he quickly clasped hands and bowed apologetically.

Letting his sleeve drop, Bai Xiaochun lowered his voice and said, “It's no matter. Elder Brother, you're not the first person to assume that I, Bai Xiaochun, am afraid of death. And the truth is that I actually do fear dying. But the reason is that I fear dying for no reason, and fear that my life will be devoid of a future!”

At the moment he felt wonderful, and couldn't help but muse that the events just now would ensure that in the future, no one would ever dare to say that he was scared of fighting in battle.

“Xiaochun....” Zhao Tianjiao said, shivering a bit.

“I understand your sentiments, Elder Brother Zhao,” Bai Xiaochun replied, “so there’s no need to speak them aloud. Fellow Daoist Li, the battle is not over yet. I suggest you issue orders to take advantage of the opportunity I’ve won you, before it fades away!”

Li Hongming looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun, and without saying a single word, waved his hand toward the battlefield outside the Great Wall.

The magical cannons on the Great Wall rumbled to life, sending beams of destructive light out into the enemy forces, and at the same time, large numbers of cultivators flew into the air, unleashing divine abilities and magical techniques in a riot of colors.

Soon, rumbling sounds filled the air. The vengeful souls struggled to fight back, but Bai Xiaochun continued to throw out Soul Convergence Pills, making it impossible for them to rally together. As a result, they continued to fall back across the battlefield.

Bangs rang out one after another as he tossed numerous medicinal pills out. One 300-meter-area after another was opened up, and the seemingly endless tide of souls was finally being beaten back. Miserable shrieks and bloodcurdling screams rang out without end.

As the tide of souls shrank, the beasts and the savages had no cover, and were unable to defend themselves against the blasts of the magical weapons. Soon, they were being cut down like chaff, with the survivors devolving into sheer madness.

Savages relied on vengeful souls for almost everything, and using them as cannon fodder to charge the Great Wall was one of the primary tactics of the Wildlands forces. But now, that tactic was completely useless!

Hearts trembling, the savages finally realized that too many strange things were occurring in this battle, and that they had no chance of surviving. Having no other choice, they began to retreat.

Before, it had seemed the battle would last until night fell, but as of this moment, evening hadn't even fallen, and it was already concluding. The Skin Flayers almost couldn't believe what was happening. In all their years fighting savages and vengeful souls, they had never experienced anything like this.

As the Wildlands forces retreated, Li Hongming clasped hands and bowed to Bai Xiaochun.

"Many thanks for your help in this battle, Fellow Daoist Bai," he said sincerely.

The Great Wall was designed as a defensive barrier, so unless dire circumstances presented themselves, the cultivators wouldn't go beyond its bounds for protracted lengths of time. Therefore, it wasn't just Li Hongming who turned to bow to Bai Xiaochun, all of the Skin Flayers in the area who had stayed behind also joined in.

"There's no need to thank me," Bai Xiaochun said somberly. "I do everything for the Heavenspan River and Sea, for my comrades-in-arms, and for my sect! If anything, I should be thanking you! Without your year-round service here on the wall, where could any of us safely practice cultivation?!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, Fellow Daoists, thank you, all of you!" With that, he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

His words were spoken with a sincerity and deep emotion that touched the hearts of all present, and caused them to approve of Bai Xiaochun even more than before. As for Li Hongming, he laughed heartily and then said, "Brother Zhao. Brother Bai. Come, come. I will personally arrange for a feast so that we can eat and drink to our heart's content!"

With that, he smiled and led the way off of the Great Wall.

His attitude was completely different this time around. Along the way, he passionately introduced the various areas of Great Wall City, and even told them some things he knew about the Wildlands. Instead of taking them to an inn, he led them to his own personal residence. There, his maidservants laid out a huge feast, and they began to socialize and eat.

“Brother Zhao, if you go outside the Great Wall, you will be completely surrounded by danger. I know that you have an impressive background, but you still have to watch out for yourself. Here, take this jade slip. These are all the maps I've collected during my years doing missions outside. Perhaps they will be of some use.” After handing over the jade slip, he raised his cup in a toast to Zhao Tianjiao.

“Many thanks!” Zhao Tianjiao said, nodding his head somberly as he accepted the jade slip and drank with Li Hongming.

“Brother Bai, I’m sure you have grand aspirations of your own that you will be pursuing, but no matter what happens, if you need help in any aspect, just say the word and I’ll be there.” From the sincere way Li Hongming looked at Bai Xiaochun, it seemed that he really did approve of him, and even wanted to be friends.

Instead of responding with words, Bai Xiaochun simply raised his drinking vessel and took a long drink. Then the three of them all joined together in a round of contented laughter.

Chen Yueshan remained off to the side, watching them with a smile and occasionally refilling their drinking vessels.

Time passed, and soon it was late in the night. The three young men were all Core Formation cultivators, and were sincerely interested in being friends. Their conversation flowed naturally, and they even exchanged some tips about puzzling cultivation problems. Overall, it was a very beneficial conversation for all of them.

Eventually, the sky began to grow light, and Zhao Tianjiao put

down his drinking vessel. Eyes shining, he rotated his cultivation base to dispel the effects of the alcohol, and then rose to his feet.

“Xiaochun. Brother Li. It’s time for me to take my leave. I hope that when I return, the three of us can once again eat and drink together!” With that, he clasped hands in farewell. Next, Bai Xiaochun and Li Hongming watched as Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan went to say their farewells to their friends and followers at the other table. Then they left the courtyard, escorted by some of the Skin Flayers to leave the Great Wall and head... into the Wildlands! Their friends and followers all went their own separate ways.

“Stay safe on your travels, Elder Brother Zhao!” Bai Xiaochun murmured as he watched them leave. In his heart, he truly admired Zhao Tianjiao, both for his cultivation base and his temperament. He even felt a bit of an impulse to follow him out into the Wildlands. However, he managed to quickly suppress that terrifying impulse before it could do anything.

“Elder Brother Zhao has his path, and I... I have my own road to follow.” Taking a deep breath, he lifted his drinking vessel and drained of the last bit of alcohol.

“My road leads back to East Sea City,” he thought. “I’ll find somewhere there to spend a few years, and then decide what to do. I definitely don’t want to stay in this crappy place for any longer than I have to.” Fully convinced that this was the right course of action, he rose to his feet to bid farewell to Li Hongming.

“Brother Bai, I know that you’re anxious to be on your way, and I don’t have much time on my hands either. I have some orders to carry out, and hope that we can meet again soon in the future. And now, let me escort you to the side gate.” With that, he led the way toward one of the side gates of Great Wall City. As they walked along, the bright, morning sun shone down to light their path.

Bai Xiaochun would occasionally look out at the sky which hung

over the area outside the Great Wall, and send his well wishes in the direction of Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan. Before long, they were at the side gate.

All he had to do was walk outside, and then he could return along the path he'd traveled to come here.

Turning to Li Hongming, he sighed and said, "Brother Li, if we're connected by destiny, then we'll meet again."

Li Hongming hesitated for a moment, then said, "Xiaochun.... You know, I really feel like this is the best place for you. Why don't you think about joining the Skin Flayers? If you enlist, then I can definitely expedite your application!"

"Huh?" As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the words spoken by Li Hongming, the sentimental feeling in his heart vanished, to be replaced by trembling fear. He didn't want to stay at the Great Wall for any longer than he had to. It was just too dangerous. He was about to shake his head in refusal, but realized that doing so would be a bit embarrassing.

Sighing, he said, "I would love to join. Unfortunately, I'm well aware that the process of enlisting with the Skin Flayers is very complicated. I don't want to add any trouble to your busy life, Brother Li. One day, if I can do it completely on my own merit, then I'll definitely join the Hall of Steel Veins.... Well then, I guess I'll be off now!" Fearing that Li Hongming might do more to try to get him to stay, he turned to leave.

However, before he could take a single step, a grave, somber voice echoed out through the air.

"Do you really want to join the Skin Flayers?"

Chapter 472: Conscripted For Ten Years!

Not only was the voice somber, but it was the weighty type that would apparently not tolerate the slightest bit of disobedience. Anyone who heard that voice would instantly feel shaken inwardly.

Even as the voice echoed out, a middle-aged man appeared, clad in a long black robe. A moment ago, he had been some distance away, but a single step brought him to stand right in front of Bai Xiaochun, blocking his path forward.

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes going wide. Whoever this man was, he moved incredibly quickly, so quickly that before his words had finished entering Bai Xiaochun’s ears, the man was already standing right there in his line of sight.

He was handsome, with long black hair that made him quite dashing despite the fact that he seemed to be middle-aged. There was also something profound about him, as though his gaze contained the starry sky itself. A mere look at him left Bai Xiaochun shaken.

Although his clothing seemed casually selected, the way he stood there made him seem as if he were fused with heaven and earth. He was not quite at the level of a deva in that regard, but seemed capable of reaching that level at any time. It was as if he could draw upon the energy of heaven and earth and transform it into boundless battle prowess.

He was not in the Deva Realm, but neither was he in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. He had reached a point where he could understand some of the magical laws of heaven and earth, which meant that he... was in the quasi-Deva Realm!!

Bai Xiaochun suddenly felt as if his breathing were stifled, and he couldn’t even speak.

Although what had occurred so far takes a bit of time to describe, all of it happened in the time it takes to say a short sentence. When Li Hongming saw who was now standing there, his expression turned profoundly solemn, and his eyes began to shine with fervor. Clasp hands, he bowed extremely deeply.

“Greetings, General!”

Bai Xiaochun’s heart immediately flip-flopped as he realized who this man was. Considering that Li Hongming had called him General, it meant that he was obviously... the commanding general of the Skin Flayers!

Bai Xiaochun immediately clasped hands and bowed.

“Greetings, General.”

The black-robed man looked calmly at Bai Xiaochun and then said, “I just asked you if you really want to enlist with the Skin Flayers.”

Bai Xiaochun immediately regretted what he had just said. Seeing the black-robed general staring at him, he started to get nervous, and stammered, “Um... w-well I don't....”

Before he could finish speaking, the black-robed man’s eyes began to shine aggressively.

“Hmm?” A murderous aura suddenly exploded off of him, transforming into wave-like ripples of rage that threatened to capsize the tiny rowboat that was Bai Xiaochun. “Think your answer through clearly before you give it.”

Despite how calmly he spoke, the man’s words echoed like thunder in Bai Xiaochun’s mind.

Bai Xiaochun felt an indescribable pressure weighing down on him, leaving him both trembling and literally on the verge of tears. His eyes were red, and he suddenly had the feeling that if he didn’t agree to enlist, then he might be struck down dead on the spot.

Swallowing hard, he said, “Um... I'm a hostage... it's kind of a sensitive position....”

“Hostage?” Looking surprised, the man waved his right hand, causing a jade slip to appear in his palm. After examining some information inside, he looked up in thought for a moment.

Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding with anxiety. He was completely convinced that he must not stay by the Great Wall; it was far too dangerous, and if he didn't leave, he would likely lose his poor little life. However, because of what was happening right now, his emotions were quickly devolving into complete despair.

After a long moment of silence, the black-robed man put away the jade slip and said, “That doesn't matter. Since you wish to stay here, then I can resolve the issue of you being a hostage. Very well, the matter is settled. From this day on, you are a soldier in the Skin Flayers!”

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and seeing that the black-robed man was already turning to leave, he quickly cried, “I'm a chosen! I'm in the top ten of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars! I'm free to do whatever I--”

“Chosen?” the man said, not even bothering to look back, his voice ringing with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron. “That's even better!”

Anger rising, Bai Xiaochun cried, “I... I don't want to enlist! I take back what I said, alright?”

“Taking it back won't do any good. You've been conscripted. Term of service: ten years.” The man stopped walking and then extended his right hand, within which appeared a violet command medallion, emblazoned with the terrifying, murderous sigil of the Skin Flayers.

“As a general of one of the five legions here at the Great Wall, I have the power to conscript anyone I want. Those were some nice

medicinal pills you used yesterday, and will be of great use here. Let me put it his way, Bai Xiaochun: you're staying here... whether you want to or not!"

Flicking his sleeve, he looked over at Li Hongming.

"Li Hongming!"

"Sir!?" Li Hongming replied loudly.

"Get him his uniform and then take him to the Armory!" With that, the man left, completely ignoring how Bai Xiaochun was reacting to all of this.

Bai Xiaochun felt like weeping, but no tears would come. That was even more the case considering that as the black-robed man had spoken moments ago, a few dozen cultivators had appeared in the area, bristling with murderous auras. They were the type who had obviously fought in countless military campaigns, and had done so much killing that their eyes glowed red. The mere fact that they were looking at Bai Xiaochun left him jumpy.

Clearly, if he refused to comply with the orders, they would not let him leave alive!

Bai Xiaochun was both furious, and also filled with regret. He knew that all of this was the result of him trying to show off a bit....

"If I could take it all back," he thought, scowling on the verge of tears, "I would never have jumped out into the limelight...." Then, he looked at the back of the black-robed man as he headed off into the distance, and decided to throw caution to the wind.

"General!" he shouted at the top of his lungs.

His words echoed out like thunder, causing the eyes of the surrounding cultivators to grow even sharper than before. Li Hongming was clearly getting anxious, worried that Bai Xiaochun might do something to offend Bai Lin. He well knew that Bai Lin was the type of person who could slaughter both savages and

cultivators without batting an eyelid. His rules for the Skin Flayers' legion were very strict, and thus, Li Hongming quickly tried to give Bai Xiaochun a meaningful look.

Meanwhile, Bai Lin stopped in place for a second time.

“What do you want?!” he said, turning around slowly, his eyes as cold as ice.

Bai Xiaochun immediately shivered as though he had suddenly been dropped into the dead of winter. He wasn't the only one to have such a feeling. Li Hongming and the other cultivators were suddenly trembling in their boots.

Dejected by how terrifying the man's gaze was, Bai Xiaochun lowered his voice and said, “If you want to conscript me into the Skin Flayers, that's fine. But you haven't told me what my salary will be!”

Li Hongming gasped in response. He knew that Bai Lin was a moody person, and if Bai Xiaochun provoked him in the wrong way, it wouldn't matter what his background was. If Bai Lin wanted Bai Xiaochun dead, then nobody in Great Wall City could stop him.

“You'll serve for ten years,” Bai Lin said coldly. “Each year, your salary will be five times what you get in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! As for other rewards, you can acquire them using battle credit!” With that, he turned to leave.

“General!!” Bai Xiaochun shouted.

This time, Li Hongming was wailing inwardly at how brazen Bai Xiaochun was acting. Li Hongming himself would never dare to open his mouth a second time, were he in Bai Xiaochun's shoes.

The other surrounding cultivators all felt the same. From what they could tell, this Bai Xiaochun... really had some balls.

As for Bai Lin, his murderous aura suddenly intensified by multiple levels. His hair began to fly around in the air as his aura

raged out, causing brightly-colored lights to flash in heaven and earth. As of this point, he looked like a god of death as he stared wordlessly at Bai Xiaochun, making the entire area seem more and more cold. The entire Skin Flayers' district was now completely and utterly silent.

Bai Xiaochun was trembling. The truth was that he didn't really want to yell out, but at the same time, he had the feeling that if he didn't make some demands now, he wouldn't get another chance later. Therefore, he steeled himself and said, "I had two Dao protectors, both of them dear friends.... They were in charge of keeping me safe. Um... I'd really hate to be stuck here all alone, is there any way you could send for them?"

Had Song Que or Master God-Diviner been there to hear his words, they would immediately have coughed up mouthfuls of blood, and instantly begun to curse him. To join the army that defended the Great Wall was like a death sentence, and anyone with sense would refuse to do so.... Furthermore, there was no way that either of them could have imagined that after fleeing again, Bai Xiaochun would be trying to get them back....

However, neither Bai Lin nor Li Hongming knew Bai Xiaochun very well, so to them, his words carried a different meaning. From what they could tell, Bai Xiaochun was worried that if he stayed at Great Wall City, his Dao protectors would probably go through a lot of trouble going around searching for him. Thus, in his attempt to care for them, he was asking that they join him.

The fact that, despite being under such pressure and facing Bai Lin's murderous aura, Bai Xiaochun would still make such a request showed how much he valued friendship and loyalty.

Bai Lin's expression immediately softened a bit.

"I'm afraid that's not possible...." he said. "However... I can promise that if you gain enough battle credit, then you can go find your two friends and conscript them yourself!" With that, Bai Lin

flickered into motion and disappeared, not giving Bai Xiaochun any more chances to say anything else.

Chapter 473: You're Bullying Me Too!

Face falling, Bai Xiaochun watched Bai Lin leave, then turned to look at Li Hongming.

An odd half-smile appeared on Li Hongming's face as he looked back. Laughing lightly, he said, "Congratulations on attracting the attention of the general, Xiaochun. It's a big honor to have someone like him personally recruit you and vouch for you. In all the years that I've been in the army, I've only seen that happen to three people. You're the fourth."

Bai Xiaochun immediately began to grumble to himself that he didn't want to become the fourth person to be personally conscripted by the general. However, he had no choice but to accept his fate, and thus, left with Li Hongming.

As the side gate got further and further away, he couldn't help but feel like he had lost his freedom, his control over his life, and his chance to pursue his dreams....

"Why did things have to turn out this way...?" he thought, sighing continuously. Complaining inwardly the entire time, he followed along as Li Hongming took him to get his uniform, which was a suit of black armor. After changing into the armor, Bai Xiaochun realized that he looked quite heroic, and yet, that didn't make him feel any better than before.

As they walked along, Li Hongming excitedly told him about the history of the Skin Flayers. Bai Xiaochun listened morosely as they head toward the location Bai Lin had indicated for him to be taken, the Armory.

What was referred to as the Armory was a well-guarded area filled with numerous courtyard residences. Despite being a colonel, even Li Hongming was inspected thoroughly before being allowed inside.

“The Armory is one of the most important locations in the Skin Flayers district. The only people who are allowed to live in this area are the grandmasters who concoct medicine, create paper talismans, and forge weapons and armor.

“Xiaochun,” Li Hongming said with a sigh, “the general really did take a liking to you!” Bai Xiaochun immediately sensed that the Armory was somewhat different than the other areas outside. Not only was it more peaceful and quiet, but there was also somewhat of an accumulation of spiritual power.

Something else that was strange was that all the cultivators in the Armory seemed very arrogant. As Li Hongming proceeded along, he would clasp hands in salute, and yet they all completely ignored him in response.

Seeing Li Hongming being given the cold shoulder made Bai Xiaochun a bit angry.

“What's so amazing about these people?!” he asked.

Li Hongming laughed and replied, “Xiaochun, they're all grandmasters. They're the people who make the tools we require to fight in battle. That's just the way things are.”

At that point, they stopped outside of the seventh building in the Armory.

“Xiaochun, this is as far as I can take you. From now on, we're fellow comrades-in-arms. If you need help with any issue, just let me know.” After a few more words of advice, he turned and left.

Bai Xiaochun sadly watched Li Hongming leave, then turned and stepped into the building which had been prepared for him. It was thousands of meters across, and other than a three-story structure at one end, was mostly just a large courtyard neatly paved with green spirit stone slabs. Considering that Great Wall City as a whole was virtually devoid of spiritual energy, that made this location a wonderful place for any cultivator.

Although Bai Xiaochun didn't really want to be stuck in Great Wall City, he had to admit that this residence wasn't too bad. He even saw a lovely little lake off to the side.

Lakes were a rarity near the Great Wall, and any that did exist were filled with black water. Therefore, to see a lake like this one with cool, clear waters instantly left him feeling relaxed.

“Ah well, I might as well just follow orders.” Sighing, he walked over and sat down next to the lake, contemplating what was to come in the future. At that point, he noticed that there were three golden carp swimming back and forth in front of him. They had long whiskers that indicated they had lived quite a long time, and most shocking of all was that they were partially translucent. Clearly, they were not mortal-tier creatures, and were the type of creatures that could be used as ingredients in medicinal creations.

“These dragonfishes must have lived for at least a sixty-year-cycle. That's pretty rare. They're the main ingredient for Fishdragon Pills.” After watching the fish for a bit, he decided to go for a walk through the Armory. Soon he realized that all of the buildings had numbers on them, and the smaller the numbers were, the larger the buildings. Furthermore, the locations of the larger buildings were also better.

He was in building 7, which was one of the best buildings in the entire Armory. After examining the building records, he looked over at the little lake that now belonged to him and murmured, “According to the records, there should be a whole school of dragonfish. Why are there only three?” Before he had time to think about the matter, his expression suddenly flickered as he looked over at a nearby wall. There, a figure was flying through the air, using some unknown method to circumvent the defensive spells and enter right into his courtyard.

It was a gaunt old man with an arrogant expression on his face, and a cultivation base in the late Core Formation stage. As soon as he entered the courtyard, he noticed Bai Xiaochun, whereupon his

eyes flickered in surprise. However, instead of saying anything, he simply walked over to the edge of the lake and, in plain view of Bai Xiaochun, reached into the water and grabbed one of the dragonfish. Then he turned to leave.

Bai Xiaochun was stunned at how condescending the man was acting. Clearly, Bai Xiaochun was standing right there, yet the man pretended not to see him and then went so far as to grab one of his treasured fish.

Bai Xiaochun had already been feeling depressed about being here, but now, his anger sparked.

“Hey, what do you think you’re doing!?” he barked.

“Concocting medicine,” the old man replied, not even bothering to stop.

“If the general wants to bully me, that’s fine. But you think you can bully me too?!” As Bai Xiaochun’s anger burned, his eyes shone with icy light. Reaching out, he made a grasping motion, simultaneously opening his third eye and sending violet light pouring out. The shocked old man attempted to flee, but was too late. In the blink of an eye, the dragonfish he had taken was snatched by Bai Xiaochun and thrown back into the lake.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun realized that there really were less dragonfish in the lake than there should have been. Obviously, the others had been stolen, and likely, all by this old man.

A very unsightly expression could be seen on the old man’s face as he backed up a few steps. Glaring at Bai Xiaochun, he chuckled coldly and said, “I’ve been living in building 8 for years, and have never seen anyone as brazen as you. The dragonfish from building 7 are mine for the taking. As for you, you trifling child, do you really think you can act so wildly in my presence?!”

Bai Xiaochun had already been irritated to begin with, and the man’s words only served to increase his irritation.

“Pipe down!” he said, taking a step forward. Instantly, cracking sounds could be heard as frigid coldness spread out in all directions, causing layers of ice to build up everywhere. Then, he performed something like a minor teleportation, placing him directly in front of the old man.

The old man’s expression flickered, and before he could even think of fleeing, Bai Xiaochun punched out with the Living Mountain Incantation. A force like an entire mountain slammed into the old man, who tumbled backward several hundred meters, blood spraying out of his mouth.

“Screw off! From now on, all the dragonfish in this place are surnamed Bai!”

Although the old man’s eyes flickered with venomous hatred, he didn’t press the issue, and simply turned and left.

Driving away the condescending old man lifted Bai Xiaochun’s mood quite a bit, so he sat down next to the lake to meditate. Before long, evening had arrived.

As the colors in the sky changed, Bai Xiaochun was just about to rise to his feet when he suddenly turned to look up into a different direction. A moment later, a few beams of light appeared, moving with lightning-like speed toward Bai Xiaochun.

Three figures approached, and in the lead was Bai Lin, clad in a black suit of armor, his face completely expressionless.

Behind him were two old men with murderous auras and Nascent Soul cultivation bases, both of whom were clearly sizing up Bai Xiaochun curiously.

Bai Xiaochun immediately stood up and said, “Greetings, General.”

“Have you gotten used to the environment in the Armory yet?” Bai Lin asked.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then carefully responded, “It’s

alright, just a bit quiet, that's all."

Having heard this, Bai Lin looked at one of the old men and said, "Lin Tao, arrange for some handmaidens to care for Bai Xiaochun's daily needs."

The old man nodded, pulling out a jade slip to send out some orders.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback at how quickly his needs were being cared for. Just as he was considering what else he should say, Bai Lin looked down at the clear waters of the lake for a moment, then up into the sky.

"The Great Wall has existed for many years," he said. "In fact, it's older than the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect itself. Do you know how many cultivators have been stationed in this city over the years, how many have fought here against the Wildlands...?"

"Too many. The five legions of the Hall of Steel Veins have only been garrisoned here for the past 10,000 years or so.

"Generations come. Generations go. People perish. People leave. But the Great Wall remains.

"Although there is a bit of rivalry between the five legions, overall, relations are good. We live up to our various areas of responsibility, guard the wall, and prevent the Wildlanders from invading."

Chapter 474: What Could Possibly Go Wrong When Concocting Medicine

Bai Xiaochun was having a hard time keeping up with what Bai Lin was saying, or at least, having trouble understanding what the point was. However, there was nothing else he could do but stand there and listen.

“The five legions all have a general and ten major generals,” Bai Lin continued. “Each major general has ten colonels beneath them, and so on, down to the lieutenants and the captains!”

“As for me, I am the current general of the Skin Flayers.” Bai Lin looked back at Bai Xiaochun, and his gaze grew even sharper than before. “I’m not the type of man to mince words. I like to say things directly, and I always mean what I say. I have a strange personality. Some people say that I’m temperamental, and others say that I’m bloodthirsty.

“Some say that I will definitely become a deva someday, and others speak of my incredible natural-born talents. People call me brilliant, and say that I have a profound understanding of strategy and tactics. There are all sorts of such talk.

“I don’t like it. I’m not interested in hearing those things, and in fact, there is only one thing that I like to hear people talking about. Do you know what that is?”

Considering how Bai Lin seemed to be blathering on so much, Bai Xiaochun had to admit that he really was quite weird. It almost seemed as if he were just randomly saying whatever came to mind. For example, what he had started talking about earlier seemed to have nothing to do with what he was talking about now.

Therefore, Bai Xiaochun simply stood there blinking for a moment until Bai Lin frowned.

“I asked you a question. Do you know what I like to hear people

talking about?” From the look in his eye, he expected Bai Xiaochun to answer the question.

“Um... no?” Bai Xiaochun said, musing that this Bai Lin really was an odd fellow.

Bai Lin’s eyes flickered with cold light as he said, “You know, I don’t like it when people do things half-heartedly!”

Bai Xiaochun was cursing inwardly, and yet, Bai Lin’s cultivation base was far higher than his own, so there was little choice. Therefore, he plastered a look on his face to make it seem like he was thinking very deeply. Then, after a long moment passed, he slapped his thigh. Eyes shining, he said, “I know! Senior, in the future, you want people to look back and remember that there was once a cultivator named Bai Lin, a man who led armies across all creation, and who protected the Great Wall for his entire life!” Bai Xiaochun was of the opinion that his flattery was flawless, and was actually starting to feel proud of himself, when he noticed that Bai Lin’s expression had turned grim.

“Wrong!” Bai Lin said, flicking his sleeve, his eyes beginning to shine brightly. “I like people to talk about how Bai Lin has a wonderful grandfather. That is because my father’s father ranks second only to the demigod patriarch in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. He is... a deva grand elder!

“And what does that mean? That means that nobody in the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect would ever dare to provoke me! Furthermore, I’m free to provoke anyone I wish! And beyond that, it means that I can dominate anyone and everyone in Great Wall City! It also means that the Skin Flayers have a profoundly shocking backer to rely on. From the day that I became the general of the Skin Flayers, I’ve had access to anything I wanted. If I lack a single thing, I simply make a request of the sect!

“In summary, the point of what I’m saying is that when you join up with the Skin Flayers, other than Deva Realm Senior Chen,

there is no greater force to be reckoned with in this city than me!” With that, he leveled a cool gaze onto Bai Xiaochun. “Understand?!”

“Uh... yeah....” Bai Xiaochun said, staring in surprise at Bai Lin. Finally, he understood what the general had come here to do, which was simply to show off his family background.... Of course, there wasn’t much difference between that and the way that Bai Xiaochun often showed off....

As for the Senior Chen that he had referred to, Bai Xiaochun was aware that he meant Chen Yueshan’s father, the three-eyed Chen Hetian.

Bai Lin nodded approvingly. As for the two Nascent Soul experts flanking him, they had no expressions on their faces whatsoever, as if they had long since grown used to Bai Lin’s personality and speeches.

Sounding very serious, Bai Lin continued, “Well, now that you understand what I like to hear people talking about, you also understand that as long as you work for me, you can have anything you need. And you also understand what I want from you! I want your service!!” By this point, Bai Lin’s eyes were beginning to shine with passion.

“I want you to work hard for our legion, to kill savages, to defeat vengeful souls, and to help us win more campaigns!

“That is why I conscripted you into the Skin Flayers. I want you to work hard at concocting medicine. Make medicines that can help us in our fight on the Great Wall. As long as you do that, you can have anything you want here in Great Wall City. In fact, I can even make things happen for you in the sect itself.

“For example, would you like the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to open more slots for River-Defying Sect cultivators to come join the sect?

“Would you like your hostage status to be removed?”

“Even if I can’t personally make it happen, my grandfather can. The only requirement is your military service!”

“Therefore, Bai Xiaochun, I want you to concoct that same medicinal pill you used before. I want lots of them. The more the better. And if possible, I want them to be even more powerful than before!”

Generally speaking, silkpants weren’t anything to fear. Naturally skilled silkpants were, though. And even more fearful were ambitious silkpants. They were the most terrifying of all....

Bai Xiaochun was actually a bit impressed by Bai Lin. However, considering they were both surnamed Bai, it was a bit annoying that Bai Lin had someone so powerful to rely on, whereas Bai Xiaochun himself didn’t.

Of course, Bai Lin’s request was something Bai Xiaochun had assumed was coming. Furthermore, considering the things that tended to happen when he concocted medicine, he also figured it was probably good to at least mention that possibility at the outset.

If he didn’t, and something bad happened, then the next time he saw Bai Lin, the man would surely be furious.

This wasn’t the River-Defying Sect, where he could do just about anything he wanted. Nor was it the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect headquarters, with Du Lingfei there to make sure he was safe.

He was now at the front lines of a war. He had seen how much fighting and killing went on beyond the Great Wall, and could sense the murderous aura that filled the entire city. He could well imagine how, if he caused some disaster, he would have a hard time protecting his poor little life, and would likely be left with no other choice than to flee the city.

Therefore, he took a deep breath and gave Bai Lin a very serious look.

“General, I can definitely concoct a lot of Soul Convergence Pills for you. That’s no problem at all. However, I invented that pill, and am familiar with the instabilities that can crop up during the concocting process. To be honest, not even I can truly explain why those things happen.”

Feeling a bit nervous, but not wanting to hide the truth, he continued, “If you want more powerful Soul Convergence Pills, then I need to do more research and experimentation. I'm not saying that I can't do that, but I do have to point out that from the time I was very young until now, I always cause huge commotions whenever I concoct medicine....”

“That doesn’t matter,” Bai Lin said, waving his hand dismissively. “What could possibly go wrong when concocting medicine?”

“I’m serious, General,” Bai Xiaochun continued cautiously. “Back in the Spirit Stream Sect, one of my pill concocting sessions caused acid rain to fall all over the whole sect. A lot of people had their clothes melted right off.... Another time, a whole bunch of animals mutated. You can’t even imagine how terrifying that was.

“Another time, I provoked lightning from heaven that destroyed my entire immortal's cave.... Later on, all the snakes in 10,000 Snakes Valley rebelled and invaded the sect because of me.” The two Nascent Soul experts behind Bai Lin already looked a bit fearful.

As for Bai Lin, he hesitated for a moment, then waved his hand dismissively again. “Those are just minor problems. Things like that won’t hurt anybody!”

Looking a bit embarrassed, Bai Xiaochun said, “I'm not finished yet....

“Um... later on in the Blood Stream Sect, my pill furnaces kept exploding... and one time I made this smoke that caused everyone on the mountain to come down with near-deadly diarrhea.... And

that's not even mentioning my Fantasy Pill, which gives people all sorts of crazy hallucinations. Oh, right. There was one time that I almost blew up an entire holy mountain....”

The two Nascent Soul experts with Bai Lin were actually major generals in the army, but even they were trembling in fear. The vivid descriptions provided by Bai Xiaochun sounded like nothing less than disasters, no matter how they analyzed them....

The worst thing of all was that they could tell that Bai Xiaochun wasn't lying.... He really was telling them of the consequences of his own medicine concocting.

Bai Lin's eyelids twitched a bit, and he hesitated for even longer this time. But finally, he waved his hand even more forcefully than before.

“It doesn't matter. You just take responsibility for getting those medicinal pills to the army. Whatever you need to do it, just ask. As for any problems which crop up during the concocting process, I'll take responsibility!”

At long last, Bai Xiaochun was able to breathe a sigh of relief. From what he could tell, now that he had offered an honest warning, if anything bad happened later, it wouldn't matter.

“Although,” he murmured to himself, “everyone who has said similar things in the past always ended up regretting it....” Whenever he thought back to everything that had occurred with medicine concocting in his life up to this point, he always sighed. At this point, he realized that considering Bai Lin had said he could have anything he needed, he decided not to hold back out of politeness.

“Okay. I need a hundred of your best, most expensive pill furnaces! Each one must have been used to successfully concoct thirty batches of medicinal pills, should have high-quality medicinal aromas, and must all look identical. Otherwise, I would have to spend time getting used to each one, which would be a

waste of time...” After the briefest of moments, he added, “...and therefore, a waste of my military service!”

Chapter 475: This Old Guy Offended Me

When Bai Lin realized that Bai Xiaochun wanted a hundred pill furnaces, and had even more requirements beyond that, he hesitated for a moment. After all, the type of pill furnace being requested were very valuable. However, Bai Xiaochun's final added words were very convincing, so Bai Lin nodded in agreement and said, "No problem at all!"

"I also need 10,000 high-grade earthflame crystals," Bai Xiaochun continued, "not a single one of them lacking even an iota of earthflame power. They need to be fully charged! By the way, that 10,000 is only for the first month. I'll need the same amount every month afterward."

"Simple!" Bai Lin said, smiling broadly. As far as he was concerned, any requirements that could be solved by means of spirit stones weren't a problem at all.

Seeing Bai Lin's casual reaction, Bai Xiaochun felt slightly irritated, and thus went on to say, "I need fuel for five-colored flame, six-colored flame, seven-colored flame and eight-colored flame!"

Bai Lin hesitated, then gritted his teeth and said, "I'll do my best."

"Plus 1,000 cloudysoul leaves! 1,000 earthspirit tubers! 1,000 atmosphere flowers...." With that, he went on to name several dozen types of medicinal plants, any one of which could only be purchased via a sizeable amount of merit points back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. There were some that were only available for purchase to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, and even a few which were considered to be extinct. But Bai Lin considered himself to be incredibly rich, and after a moment of thought, agreed to all the demands.

Despite wracking his brains, Bai Xiaochun couldn't think of any

other ingredients or items he needed, so decided to change tactics a bit. “Oh right. Concocting medicine is very draining on one’s energy and cultivation base, and will be even worse considering the surroundings. If you want me to work without resting, then I need some supreme-grade spirit alcohol to keep my cultivation base going!”

Bai Lin immediately let out a hearty burst of laughter. “You got it!” However, only a moment later, his eyes shone with a cold light, and his murderous aura began to pulse dangerously. “However... although, I can give you everything you’ve asked for, when it comes to what I want, if you fail to--”

Flicking his sleeve, Bai Xiaochun interrupted proudly to say, “No ifs! When it comes to concocting medicine, when Bai Xiaochun says that he can do it, he definitely can!”

Bai Xiaochun couldn’t have anyone questioning his ability to concoct medicine, after all!

Bai Lin seemed taken aback, and yet, didn’t get angry. In fact, a broad smile could be seen on his face. He respected people with skill, and Bai Xiaochun seemed completely confident in his abilities. As such, Bai Lin could only assume that he truly was very skilled at concocting medicine.

Furthermore, Bai Lin wasn’t worried about any so-called disasters. After all, no one in Great Wall City would dare to provoke him. On the other hand, if Bai Xiaochun didn’t end up concocting the medicine, then Bai Lin would make sure he reaped the harsh consequences of lying.

Laughing, he looked at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Very well. You’ll get everything you need within three days. If there’s anything else you require, say the word. The only thing I care about is that you succeed in the end!”

After a moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun looked over at the wall leading to building 8. Not only had the old man from that building

casually stolen his property, he had also given him a very dirty look. Earlier, he knew that, as a newcomer, it would be wisest not to cause any problems that might have negative ramifications later.

But now that he realized how important Soul Convergence Pills were to Bai Lin, he decided that he might as well add in one last requirement and see how Bai Lin handled it. Eyes narrowing, he said, “I’m afraid my courtyard isn’t large enough to contain all one hundred pill furnaces, and that old guy over in building 8 offended me earlier.”

Bai Lin seemed surprised, and looked at Bai Xiaochun deeply for a moment.

“You know, Bai Xiaochun, the more requirements you add on, the less room you have for failure. Very well. Henceforth, building 8 belongs to you! As for Grandmaster Chen, you won’t see him for the next ten years. Furthermore, you--” Before he could finish speaking, an intense rumbling roar could be heard from beyond the Great Wall, something so loud that the whole city seemed to shake.

Bai Lin’s pupils constricted, and Bai Xiaochun’s heart instantly began to pound in shock. Everyone looked over in the direction of the Great Wall, and could see that, at some unknown point, the clouds in the darkening evening sky had formed a huge vortex. The vortex was so large that it was impossible to even see the end of it, and pouring out of it, like prisoners escaping from a jail cell, were endless numbers of vengeful souls, all of whom were furiously charging in the direction of Great Wall City.

The vast number of souls was enough to make anyone’s scalp go numb. They seemed evil and ferocious to the extreme, and a few of the unfortunate cultivators from the five legions who happened to be outside the wall dispatching some enemies were pounced upon and instantly reduced to desiccated corpses!

“How could this be happening?!?! Someone’s using some type of grand magic to tap into the Underworld River!!” With that, Bai Lin shot with lightning-like speed toward the Great Wall.

Bai Xiaochun gasped, and once again realized that the intense sensation of deadly crisis he was feeling right now was just how life was at the Great Wall!

The flames of battle could rage at any time!

After a long moment, he exhaled slowly, more conscious than ever that his Soul Convergence Pill could probably be very useful on the battlefield.

Thankfully, he was very familiar with how to concoct Soul Convergence Pills, and since all he had to do was make them a bit stronger, was confident that it wouldn’t be extremely difficult. After all, he only needed to adjust the pill formula a bit. He had been devoted to the Dao of medicine for years, and had even concocted a River-Defying Pill, so he had absolute confidence in being able to add bit of strength to a trifling Soul Convergence Pill.

Despite that, he still felt a bit nervous, not because of the pill itself, but rather, the strange things that often happened when he went about his concocting work. However, Bai Lin had unequivocally guaranteed to take responsibility, so therefore, Bai Xiaochun felt a bit better.

Considering the level of his Dao of medicine, there was no saying that he would even cause any problems at all. Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun was very excited, and decided that Great Wall City actually wasn’t a very bad place after all.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, end up being like a shining star wherever I go. Ai. It’s not like I want to be that way.” Humming a little tune, he swaggered back into his residence.

The next day, a large group of cultivators entered building 8, and

Bai Xiaochun soon heard bellows of rage coming from Grandmaster Chen. However, such cries soon faded away, and less than two hours later, the wall between buildings 7 and 8 had been torn down.

In the end, the two courtyards were connected, and a new spell formation put in place. As of this point, Bai Xiaochun's residence was about twice the size as it had been.

The limestone flooring in the two courtyards was connected, and soon, more spiritual energy than before could be detected. Although it was still rather weak, to anyone else in Great Wall City, it would be a luxury. In fact, the only other type of people who would have access to so much spiritual energy would be major generals.

When Bai Xiaochun emerged from his residence and looked out at the expansive courtyard, he felt quite satisfied. From what he could tell, no one in the same generation as him could possibly have a finer immortal's cave.

“Not bad. Not bad at all.” Despite being very happy, he did feel that the place was a bit empty. However, that afternoon, one of the major generals in the Skin Flayers arranged for about a dozen handmaidens to come over and help take care of the place. At that point, Bai Xiaochun felt that everything was perfect.

Of course, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had moved into the Armory, and that the day after, Grandmaster Chen had been kicked out of building 8 by the Skin Flayers, was news that shocked all of the other grandmasters.

The residents of the Armory were all famous cultivators, and although none of them were really close friends with each other, when they saw the aggressive way that Bai Xiaochun threw his weight around, they weren't very happy.

“Let's see how long things last for this kid!”

“Hmph! General Bai Lin of the Skin Flayers only cares about results. If this Bai Xiaochun doesn’t make him completely happy, he’s definitely going to be furious!”

“The more Bai Lin gives you, the worse things are if you fail. This kid is a complete idiot. He's definitely going to be dead sooner rather than later!”

Bai Xiaochun was unaware of how the other grandmasters in the Armory were talking about him, but whenever he went out for a walk, he could sense their coldness.

“Hmph,” he muttered. “I can’t help but feel that my residence is still a bit too small.” Another day went by. Around evening, Bai Xiaochun went for another stroll, and when he came back, his eyes immediately began to shine.

There in his courtyard were one hundred pill furnaces, neatly lined up, each one of them fully three meters tall. Standing in front of the pill furnaces was one of the same major generals who had come to visit him with Bai Lin a few days before. The old man was flanked by four youths, all of whom were staring wordlessly at Bai Xiaochun.

The pill furnaces were greenish-black, and were all identical, carved with auspicious qilins. They all emanated powerful auras as well.

Furthermore, despite the fact that furnaces weren’t being used to concoct anything at the moment, they were surrounded by a strong medicinal aroma.

Hurrying forward excitedly, Bai Xiaochun quickly began to inspect the furnaces, after which his eyes shone brightly. “He actually did get me a hundred pill furnaces, all of them tier-3 at that!”

Chapter 476: It's Gonna Blow!

Off to the side, Bai Xiaochun saw a pile of a few dozen bags of holding. Upon checking them, he gasped at the sight of 10,000 earthflame crystals. Furthermore, everything else that he had asked for was there, without exception.

Even the spirit alcohol he had requested had been provided in full measure.

“Bai Lin wasn’t just showing off. Three days! It only took him three days to get all of this!” By this point, his eyes were shining with excitement and determination. Furthermore, he was determined that, considering Bai Lin had kept his promise, there was absolutely no reason to hold back from working hard to keep his.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun looked over at the major general.

“If it’s not too much trouble,” he said, “please let the general know that I won’t hold anything back in my work!”

The old man nodded. “These are four of my best soldiers. You have a big responsibility to bear, so I’m going to leave them here to stand guard and make sure nobody disturbs you.” With that, the old man turned and left.

The four young men had cold expressions on their faces as they walked some distance off and then sat down cross-legged. From the look of it, they weren’t there to protect him, but to keep an eye on him.

After all, the items which had just been delivered were extremely valuable, and had only been acquired through some effort on Bai Lin’s part.

Bai Xiaochun immediately ignored the gazes of the four young men. He was simply too excited. The sight of so many pill furnaces

and so many medicinal plant ingredients had him itching to get to work.

“It’s been a long time since I concocted any medicine....” he murmured, licking his lips. Having nothing to fear regarding future ramifications, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but feel that everything in life was going perfectly at the moment.

He even threw his head back and laughed merrily. As for the four young men, they looked over at him and frowned, but did little else.

“To make my Soul Convergence Pills more powerful, I can’t just add more medicinal ingredients. I need to completely readjust the formula....” With that, he sat down cross-legged and began to take the medicinal plants out of the bags of holding. Then, the light of augury flickered in his eyes as he began to analyze them on a deep level.

Soon, the foundations of a new medicine formula appeared in his head. Three days went by in a flash, during which time Bai Xiaochun didn’t sleep or rest. He was completely immersed in the process of adjusting the medicine formula. His eyes soon became shot with blood, and occasionally he would stand up and pace around in the courtyard, muttering to himself.

“No, that won’t work!

“Should I use smelting techniques? There isn’t much spiritual energy here, so it would be hard to make that work....

“Completely seal the pill furnace? The impure vital energy would make the ingredients melt faster, but with so much qi in the mix, there would be a bigger risk of the furnaces exploding....”

Bai Xiaochun muttered and frowned, seemingly bedeviled. As for the four guards, they often exchanged awkward glances at Bai Xiaochun’s strange behavior.

Meanwhile, the other grandmasters in the Armory had heard

that Bai Xiaochun was beginning to concoct medicine, and their hearts were all filled with cold laughter. Some of them even went over to Bai Xiaochun's residence to try to get a peek at what he was doing.

The guards didn't pay them any attention. As long as they didn't enter the residence itself, they wouldn't do anything to interfere with them.

"He's being deliberately mystifying. I can't wait to see the true level of his skill!"

"Hmph! If he doesn't concoct the first batch successfully, his head will be on the chopping block!"

Of course, even to these grandmasters, the sight of a hundred top-quality pill furnaces was shocking, and led to quite a bit of jealousy and envy.

Two more days went by, and some of the grandmasters who had gathered outside started to get impatient and leave. Before long, only eight remained behind. Bai Lin also came for a visit, his face grim because of the fighting that was going on outside. After looking at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, he decided not to disturb him, and left.

On the afternoon of the sixth day, Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked up. His eyes were bloodshot, and his face a bit wan. However, a strange gleam could be seen in his pupils.

"I need to use the cloudysoul leaf as the main ingredient. Yes. I'll bolster the formula with just a bit of earthspirit tuber, add in the unique properties of the atmosphere flower, and then seal the pill furnace up tight. That should increase the power of the Soul Convergence Pill by several times! Well, there's only one way to find out if I'm right. I'll start out with ten batches." By this point, Bai Xiaochun had lost track of time, and wasn't even aware that there were people around watching him. Convinced that he was going in the right direction, he waved his right hand, causing ten

pill furnaces to fly over and land in front of him. Then he waved his sleeve, sending their lids flying off.

Next, he tossed some earthflame crystals underneath the pill furnaces, and unleashed their earthflame power. In the blink of an eye, the ten pill furnaces turned bright red, and began to emanate intense heat. The four young guards all looked over, intense expressions of concentration on their faces.

Bai Xiaochun was completely focused on the furnaces. Even as they continued to heat up, he unhesitatingly began to put the medicinal plant ingredients inside, following the formula that currently existed in his head. Because this was his first test, he was careful with every action, hoping to prevent any failures from cropping up at the end of the concocting process. He even put all the ingredients into the furnaces in very careful order. In this session of concocting, he was at his peak state, whether that meant his thinking, or his actions.

That was why he had selected only ten furnaces, and also why he was being very careful about the order he put the ingredients in. Finally, his eyes shone as he put the lids back onto the furnaces, performed a double-handed incantation gesture, and then roared, "Seal!"

Numerous magical sealing marks flew out from his hands, landing on one of the furnaces, which trembled in response. After the sealing was performed, its lid was closed tighter than ever, leaving not even the slightest opening.

He employed more than a hundred such sealing marks, until he was sure that the furnace was absolutely shut tight. It wasn't even possible for smoke to emerge from it.

Having accomplished these things, Bai Xiaochun had sweat dripping down his face. However, he didn't look away from the furnaces. Slapping his bag of holding, he produced a bottle of spirit alcohol, downed it, and then continued to add sealing marks to the

furnace. When he was satisfied, he went on to seal the other nine furnaces, after which he took a few steps back, face a bit pale. Settling down cross-legged, he began to do some breathing exercises.

The four young guards had been watching the whole time, and although they pretended that they understood what was going on, they really didn't. However, the surrounding grandmasters apparently did.

“Is he sealing the medicinal ingredients?”

“No, that can't be right. You don't seal the ingredients by sealing the furnaces, do you? What is he thinking?”

“Sealing the furnaces increases their chances of exploding. Does this Bai Xiaochun really know how to concoct medicine?!”

“He's wasting all of those precious medicinal plants!! I guarantee you that those furnaces will explode within eight hours! Hmph! When the time comes, you people just wait and see if I'm right!” The disdain that the grandmasters felt for Bai Xiaochun was very clear.

Time passed, and soon the eight-hour mark approached. The grandmasters were all staring at the pill furnaces, and just as they had predicted, the furnaces were not just bright red, they were trembling and emitting cracking noises. There were even heatwaves spreading out in all directions.

The situation seemed especially dire with five of the furnaces. Cracks were spreading out over their surfaces, and it seemed very likely that they were going to explode.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide when he saw those five particular furnaces. Backing away, he shouted, “Those furnaces are gonna blow. Everybody, heads up!”

Even as he edged away, his hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture as he tried to protect the five pill furnaces that

weren't cracked.

As for the four young guards, cold smiles could be seen on their faces. These young men had fought in countless battles, and had profound Core Formation cultivation bases. As far as they were concerned, they had seen everything there was to see, and therefore, a few exploding pill furnaces wasn't anything to worry about. Right?

As for the grandmasters outside of the residence, they were all looking on disdainfully, and even with disinterest.

“What's the big deal about a few trifling pill furnaces exploding? This Grandmaster Bai really doesn't know how to keep his cool.”

“When a concocting session ends with the pill furnace exploding, the size of the explosion depends on the type of pill furnace and the type of pill. A tier-3 pill furnace will make a bit of a bang, but it's nothing to be scared of.”

“Sealing the pill furnace might make the medicinal pills inside slightly stronger, and can lead to the furnace exploding, but won't add that much power.”

When the four young guards heard what the grandmasters were saying, they calmed down a bit. However, considering how close they were to the pill furnaces, some of them brought out defensive magical devices just in case.

Chapter 477: What Magical Items Were They!

One of the young guards was so confident in the level of his cultivation base that he didn't even take out a defensive magical device. As the surrounding grandmasters continued to scorn Bai Xiaochun....

The surfaces of two of the five weakened pill furnaces were suddenly covered with nothing but cracks. Apparently, the energy that had been building up inside them had reached a point that the furnaces couldn't contain it anymore. Finally, both furnaces exploded.

A wave of energy immediately burst out, filled with shockingly terrifying power. Shrapnel buzzed out in all directions like meteors, accompanied by a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering boom.

As the energy wave spread outward, the air distorted, and brightly colored light flashed in heaven and earth. Everyone in the area felt their ears tingling with pain from the intense noise.

The courtyard's spell formation was instantly damaged, and although it wasn't completely destroyed, several enormous holes were punched into it.

As for the four young guards, their eyes went wide and their mouths opened, but they had no time to do anything else. In the blink of an eye, the energy wave from the two exploding pill furnaces was upon them.

The three who had taken precautionary actions had it better off. Blood sprayed out of their mouths as they were blown back several hundred meters. There, they slammed into the ground, bones shattered and blood oozing out of their eyes, ears, noses, and mouths. Even their soul flames were flickering, as though their

souls might be wrenched out of them at any moment.

As for the fourth young guard, the cocky one who had failed to take out a defensive magical item, he screamed miserably as the energy blast picked him up and hurled him far off into the distance. No one could even tell where he landed....

Things weren't over yet, though. If those four young guards were affected in such a way, it almost wasn't necessary to mention all of the grandmasters, none of whom had produced any defensive items at all. Despite being outside of the courtyard, they were incapable of fleeing, and as the energy wave continued to spread, miserable screams rang out as they were violently hurled backward.

Blood sprayed out of their mouths, and their souls seemed to teeter unstably. Each and every one was injured without exception....

Simultaneously, everything in the area began to shake, and quite a few nearby buildings collapsed. The power that was being unleashed right now was almost unimaginable!

“This is impossible!!”

“Heavens! Was that explosion really from a pill furnace?!?!”

“How could this be happening? What did Bai Xiaochun do to that pill furnace? I've been concocting pills for my entire life, and I've never seen an explosion like that! That was more like some sort of deadly magical attack!!”

Even as their shrieks rang out, the Armory continued to tremble, and numerous cultivators flew out into the open and looked in the direction of Bai Xiaochun's residence, shocked expressions on their faces. Bai Xiaochun was quite frightened by what was happening. However, he had been retreating to begin with, and also had an incredibly powerful fleshly body, and furthermore, didn't hesitate to unleash some frigid qi to protect himself. As such, he was

unharmmed.

Even he had been completely unaware that his newly developed medicine formula would cause an explosion of this scale. It was almost on the same level as an attack by a Nascent Soul cultivator.

Furthermore, the Soul Convergence Pills were designed to affect souls, and therefore, everyone affected felt as if their souls were about to be ripped out of their bodies. Many of them were now staring ahead blankly, as if they had lost the ability to even think.

And that was the result of only two exploding pill furnaces. It was easy to imagine what could happen if more of them exploded. Most likely, the people in the area would either be ripped to shreds, or at least, sustain incredible damage to their souls.

“This... this....” A look of blank shock could be seen on Bai Xiaochun’s face as he looked at the remaining three pill furnaces. Cracks were spreading out on their surfaces, and energy was continuing to build up inside of them. Clearly, they were about to explode. Gasping, Bai Xiaochun began to back up.

It was in that instant that an enraged roar filled the air.

“Bai Xiaochun!!!” It was like a deafening clap of heavenly thunder that shook everything in the area. Simultaneously, a black-clad figure suddenly teleported into the area from off in the distance.

It was none other General Bai Lin of the Skin Flayers!

Feeling both wronged and crestfallen, Bai Xiaochun blurted, “You can't blame me! I warned you about this!”

After all, he really had offered a warning, only to be disbelieved....

Moments before, Bai Lin had been on the wall, offering support to the troops as they fought. Because someone had tampered with the Underworld River, there were currently boundless amounts of vengeful souls outside of the Great Wall. The five legions were under a lot of pressure, especially because necromancers had been

spotted out in the enemy forces. It was for that very reason that Bai Lin had personally taken charge of the battle.

However, before the necromancers could make a move, a huge explosion had rocked the Armory, sending out an energy blast that shocked even Bai Lin. Alarmed, he had teleported over, to be met with a scene of complete disaster. Everyone in the area was coughing up blood, and in addition to that, there were three severely damaged pill furnaces that were clearly on the verge of detonating.

Despite being enraged, there was no time for thought or planning on Bai Lin's part. Roaring, he grabbed the three pill furnaces, then teleported up to the Great Wall and hurled them out toward the other side.

Outside of the Great Wall, countless vengeful souls blotted out the sky because of their sheer numbers. Many of them were converging together to form soul emperors that howled at the tops of their lungs as they charged, seemingly oblivious to their own existence or destruction. As the shimmering shield rising up from the wall rippled under the force of the attacks, the cultivators of the five legions poured all the power they could into their magical cannons, sending destructive beams of light out without cease. Unfortunately, there were just too many souls, and the resistance of the cultivators was already proving to be somewhat futile.

There were also large numbers of savages intermingled amidst the souls, who used their formidable physical bodies to viciously fight their way toward the wall, where they would unhesitatingly self-detonate. As a result, casualties were rising among the five legions.

It was in that moment that the three scarlet pill furnaces, each one of them roughly three meters tall, sailed through the air like suns, crushing anything in their path.

Then, they landed on the ground, so many cracks spreading out

on their surfaces that it seemed impossible for them to last any longer without exploding!

The savages seemed shocked that they were being attacked by pill furnaces, which were objects completely unfamiliar to them. One of the savages, who was several dozen meters tall, snorted coldly and flew through the air toward the nearest furnace, upon which he unleashed a mighty fist strike.

In that instant, the combined forces inside and outside of the furnace proved too much for it to sustain. A boom echoed out that could shake heaven and earth as the furnace exploded, sending burning shrapnel out all over the battlefield. As everything in the area shook violently, countless vengeful souls screamed, and many of the nearby beasts which couldn't avoid the blast were instantly lit on fire.

The savage who had just struck the pill furnace screamed as the energy overwhelmed him, wiping out most of his body as he was flung backward.

However, the explosion itself was not the most powerful aspect of the blast. The medicinal strength of the Soul Convergence Pill was instantly unleashed into a 3,000-meter area, causing all of the vengeful souls to tremble as they were latched onto by a powerful gravitational force. Then, the energy shockwave rolled past, shredding them to bits!

Everything happened so quickly that the savages and vengeful souls had no time to react. Moments later, the other two pill furnaces exploded, and in the briefest of instants, deafening booms and shrill screams filled the entire battlefield.

Numerous savages were slain, and countless beasts and souls were ripped apart. Seas of flame erupted out, and enormous, shocking craters were torn into the ground....

As the blood and gore spread out in all directions, the surviving savages looked around in shock, and even the mostly unintelligent

vengeful souls seemed terrified....

“What were those magical items!?!?”

“How could this be happening? I've never seen anything like this!” One by one, the savages turned to look at the Great Wall, expressions of profound fear on their faces.

The truth was that they weren't the only ones to react in such a way. The cultivators on the Great Wall, not only the Skin Flayers, but also the cultivators from the other four legions, were dumbstruck.

“What were those things...?”

“How come they seemed like pill furnaces?”

“How is that even possible? How could pill furnaces release power like that!?”

“I'm pretty sure that General Bai Lin of the Skin Flayers personally threw them out! Could it be some sort of newly invented magical item?!?!?”

Everyone was shaken, and in fact, Bai Lin was so shocked that his anger completely dissipated. He stood there looking out blankly at the craters outside of the Great Wall, and the terrified souls and savages, and after a moment, he began to pant. Then, his eyes began to glow with unprecedented brightness, and even joy.

Chapter 478: Do You Know What You've Done, Bai Xiaochun?

“The explosion is of secondary value,” Bai Lin thought, his eyes shining more brightly by the moment. “The most important aspect is the medicinal effect, which increases the potency by severalfold....” Finally, he laughed loudly for a moment before turning and heading back toward the Armory.

Bai Xiaochun was currently feeling very out of sorts as he stood there, nervously watching the remaining five pill furnaces. Quite a few cultivators had come to investigate the huge noise from earlier, and were now staring in shock at the wreckage in the area.

Although Bai Xiaochun’s residence hadn’t been completely destroyed, it had been severely damaged. Of the four guards, one had been flung to parts unknown, and the remaining three were now looking at Bai Xiaochun with expressions of dread on their faces.

As for the grandmasters, they were all consuming medicinal pills and glaring angrily at Bai Xiaochun.

“You really can’t blame me,” he said nervously. “I warned you all ahead of time....

“Listen to me, everyone. Either back up, or take out some defensive magical items. After all... you people came here of your own volition. I didn't ask you over.

“When I used to concoct medicine back in the day, no one would even get close. Back on Middle Peak in the Blood Stream Sect, the minute I started concocting medicine, everyone fled the whole mountain.” It would probably have been better if Bai Xiaochun hadn’t said anything at all. As soon as the words left his mouth, the people who had just recently been injured flared into a rage.

“You destroyed the Armory! You hurt your fellow disciples! Let’s

see how you explain this to the general, Bai Xiaochun!”

“When other people cause pill furnaces to explode, they lose the pill, nothing more. But you were obviously trying to cause problems!”

Everyone was glaring at him with gritted teeth, especially the grandmasters, who now hated Bai Xiaochun more than ever. After all, they had merely come to see what was happening, and could never have guessed that their lives would have been at risk because of exploding pill furnaces. Even more terrifying was how they had felt their souls being tugged at.

Bai Xiaochun really felt a headache coming on, and that was only compounded when he thought about how angry Bai Lin had been. Obviously, Bai Lin had ignored all of the warnings that Bai Xiaochun had given.

As he considered that point, his frown deepened, and his sighs grew longer. Even as he was trying to come up with some good ideas about how to explain himself, a beam of light rumbled through the air in his direction.

It was none other than General Bai Lin!

He was moving with such incredible speed that he appeared above the Armory only a moment later, where he dropped down in front of Bai Xiaochun.

Looking very somber, and eyes shining with an odd gleam, he looked at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Do you know what you’ve done, Bai Xiaochun?”

Bai Xiaochun had no idea what had occurred outside of the Great Wall, and as a result, his heart was pounding with fear and anger. Therefore, he decided to just throw caution to the wind.

“General,” he said loudly, “I told you about what can happen when I concoct medicine. You said that I should focus on my work, and that you would take responsibility for everything else. You

said the results of my work would have nothing to do with me. You said--”

Before he could finish speaking, Bai Lin stepped forward and grabbed his arm. Not only was he incredibly quick, but his cultivation base was far beyond Bai Xiaochun’s. Therefore, it was impossible for Bai Xiaochun to evade him. As soon as Bai Xiaochun felt himself being grabbed by Bai Lin, a tremor ran through him, and he prepared to call upon his frigid qi to defend himself. However, it was at that point that he realized Bai Lin had a very strange expression on his face.

His eyes were shining with unprecedented brightness, and he could hardly keep his breathing under control. He was almost looking at Bai Xiaochun the way one might look at a rare gem.

“How could the results have nothing to do with you? More like the opposite! Hahaha! Bai, my boy, you definitely didn’t disappoint. Keep up the good work! Concoct away to your heart’s content. Who cares about a few exploded pill furnaces, right?!”

“Do things exactly how you want to. The more explosions that occur, the better. In fact, if you can make them even more explosive, that would be great. The more terrifying the better. And don’t worry, I’ll take care of any dangerous situations!” With that, he threw his head back and laughed heartily.

Not only was Bai Xiaochun shocked by Bai Lin’s words, but so were all the other spectators, who had all assumed that Bai Lin would descend in a deadly rage. Never could they have imagined that things would turn out opposite of the way they had anticipated.

“What’s... what’s going on...?” The recently injured grandmasters almost couldn’t believe what they were seeing. It surpassed their imaginations to the point that it didn’t even seem real.

Even as everyone stared in shock, Bai Lin thought back to what

had just occurred outside the Great Wall, and his excitement continued to build. As far as he was concerned, each and every exploding pill furnace was a deadly weapon that could be unleashed upon the souls and savages!

Furthermore, they could be used to accumulate incredible battle credit!

Throughout the years, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had come up with many ideas to deal with the Wildlanders. They had tried all sorts of soul-exterminating techniques, but none of them would ever be very effective for long. Usually, the Wildlanders would come up with a way to neutralize whatever effect was being used against them.

Therefore, Bai Lin wasn't expecting Bai Xiaochun's new method to be effective for very long. However, even just being able to dominate the sea of souls temporarily would be a good thing. Furthermore, the Underworld River had recently been tampered with, which was a major event. Even the Deva Chen was enraged by that development.

"Bai, my boy," Bai Lin said seriously, "I only have one requirement, and that is to work faster. Can you pick up the speed of your concocting work?!?!"

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback. This was his first time hearing Bai Lin address him as 'my boy,' and it sounded somewhat intimate. It took him a moment to realize that Bai Lin wasn't actually reprimanding him, but rather, encouraging him to make more exploding pill furnaces.

"I can't believe someone wants me to detonate pill furnaces intentionally. I guess Bai Lin must have found some use for them...." Unable to hold back his curiosity, he simply asked Bai Lin directly.

Bai Lin didn't conceal the truth. He explained what had just occurred outside the Great Wall, after which Bai Xiaochun's face lit

up with excitement.

Lifting his head proudly, he said, “Well, that’s what I thought would happen. Did you really think my research was just about how to improve the Soul Converge Pills? Obviously, I was aiming for something more useful, and apparently, I succeeded.

“When Bai Xiaochun concocts medicine, he always ponders how to do it in the most timely and advantageous fashion. You know, I actually intended for the pill furnaces to explode. Furthermore, the medicinal pills in the furnaces were only ninety percent complete. The final blast of energy was what catalyzed the last bit of the process, releasing the perfect amount of medicinal strength at exactly the moment of detonation!” With that, he flicked his sleeve and stuck his chin up.

Everyone else in the area exchanged awkward glances; if they hadn’t heard his nervous explanations from moments before, they might actually have believed him.... Bai Lin cleared his throat, but didn’t interrupt Bai Xiaochun’s boasting. Apparently, he even approved of it.

That in and of itself left everyone even more shaken. None of them had ever seen Bai Lin treat someone with such courtesy. It made it very obvious how highly he valued Bai Xiaochun.

Waving his sleeve proudly, Bai Xiaochun said, “Don’t worry, Brother Bai, it will take three days at the most for me to get another batch of exploding furnaces ready. No problem at all.”

Bai Lin laughed heartily, then set a specific date to come get the furnaces, after which he turned to leave.

Before vanishing, he cast an ominous glare at the grandmasters in the area, causing them to duck their heads and scatter. They were all feeling very down about the whole thing, but there was nothing they could do but grit their teeth and endure.

As for the three young guards, they were thoroughly rebuked by

their major general for what had happened. Later, their friends told them what had occurred outside of the Great Wall, leaving them completely awestruck.

As for the young guard who had been blasted off to parts unknown, he eventually was found, weak-kneed and nearly torn to shreds. The terror he felt toward Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been more intense.

And thus, the ordeal ended. As for the other five pill furnaces, Bai Xiaochun opened them up later that night to find that, even though the furnaces hadn't detonated, the medicinal pills inside of them were nothing more than slag.

He pondered the matter for a while, then got some rest. The following morning at dawn, he emerged from his residence, sat down in front of the pill furnaces and took a deep breath. Then he shouted, "Everybody, stay back. Don't say I didn't warn you. Bai Xiaochun is starting to concoct medicine!"

His voice echoed out like thunder to fill the entire Armory.

The other grandmasters hurried out of their residences and scurried off into the distance, their hearts burning with fury. As for the four young guards, they began to tremble, and despite not wanting to stay behind, had no choice in the matter. They could only brace themselves, rotate their cultivation bases, and remain fully vigilant.

Apparently, Bai Xiaochun's warning was effective. Feeling very pleased, he flicked his sleeve to begin concocting. This time, he decided to work on twenty batches!

Chapter 479: Thirteen!

“I think I'm heading in the right direction. I just overlooked a few of the problems that cropped up because of the ingredient interactions. I should be able to do a few tests and work things out. In any case, as long as the furnaces continue to explode, the general will be happy.” Bai Xiaochun sighed, convinced that life in Great Wall City was actually wonderful.

At the very least, he could concoct medicine in any way he wished, without fear of any punishments. He even got rewarded for detonating pill furnaces, which had never happened before.

Looking at the furnaces which had survived the first concocting session, Bai Xiaochun calmed himself and put a somber expression on his face. This time, he intended to vary the ingredient levels in each pill furnace, that way he would be able to quickly identify which medicine formula was the most effective.

Having reached the conclusion that this was definitely the best idea, he got to work. Drawing upon the incredible speed of his fleshly body, he began to produce medicinal plants and toss them into the furnaces. He would occasionally adjust the earthflame, ensuring that all of the various batches were being concocted slightly differently.

Of course, he couldn't forget how Bai Lin had requested more power. Therefore, he added extra atmosphere flower to some of the furnaces, and yet, was careful not to go overboard. After all, he was concocting these pills in his own residence, and if he somehow lost control of one of the batches, causing the furnace to explode ahead of schedule, he could end up hurting himself.

It was with caution and reserve that he continued to walk back and forth between the twenty different pill furnaces, making adjustments and occasionally adding more medicinal plants until all twenty of the furnaces were glowing bright red, and were

emanating powerful medicinal aromas.

As he descended into complete and utter focus regarding this concocting session, the four young guards were off to the side, trembling with fear and anxiety. Then, after a few hours had passed, they noticed that Bai Xiaochun was putting lids onto all of the pill furnaces and sealing them. Instantly, the four guards' minds began to reel.

“This is bad! Grandmaster Bai is sealing the pill furnaces again!”

“Heavens! The last set of furnaces exploded because they were sealed, and the energy couldn't escape. After enough energy built up, the furnaces couldn't take it any longer, and exploded....”

“What do we do now?!” The four of them exchanged glances, then gritted their teeth and pulled out defensive magical items, simultaneously backing as far away from the pill furnaces as they could.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were glued to the pill furnaces, and as he adjusted the earthflame, rumbling sounds began to rise up. “This time, one of these furnaces is definitely going to explode. It's hard to say which one it will be, but as long as just one of them blows, that will be enough!”

Of course, his mind was filled with the various ingredient ratios for all twenty furnaces. That, coupled with his manipulation of the earthflame and other concocting methods, would hopefully lead him in the direction of the ultimate medicine formula.

Soon, sixteen hours had gone by. All twenty pill furnaces were bright red, and were emanating terrifying fluctuations, as well as intense heat. The four young guards were shaking visibly, and their hair was standing on end.

“Last time it took only eight hours. But now... now....”

“It's already been sixteen hours so far!!”

Suddenly, four of the pill furnaces began to emit cracking

sounds, and appeared to be in the process of breaking open!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he shouted, "They're gonna blow!!"

Simultaneously, he backed up, performing a double-handed incantation gesture as he threw a handful of paper talismans out in front of him, and even used a few magical items to put up some shields.

The faces of the four young guards completely fell, and yet, even as they hesitated about what to do, cracks spread out across the surfaces of seven more pill furnaces. Even the ground beneath those furnaces was starting to sink down and distort; clearly these furnaces were about to detonate!

"Elev... eleven!!"

"Last time only two detonated, and we almost had our souls wrenched out of our bodies. This time eleven are gonna blow!!" Without any hesitation, everyone began to flee from the courtyard.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was so shocked that his eyes were on the verge of popping out of his head.

"Eleven of them this time!?" Even as a feeling of unease rose up in his heart, and he backed up, two more pill furnaces emitted cracking sounds! Two more furnaces were about to explode!

"Thirteen?!" Bai Xiaochun said with a gasp. Suddenly, he had a very bad feeling in the pit of his stomach. Even as he backed up more, shocking auras spread out from the thirteen pill furnaces, and more cracks appeared on their surfaces. By this point, it was actually possible to see with the naked eye that the energy buildup in the furnaces had reached the point where they would detonate at any moment.

However, that was when a peal of maniacal laughter suddenly rang out, and Bai Lin miraculously appeared, looking down elatedly at the thirteen pill furnaces, as if they were the most

valuable of precious treasures. With that, he swished his sleeve, and the thirteen scalding hot pill furnaces flew up into the air like miniature suns. Then, Bai Lin called upon the full power of his cultivation base to shoot up toward the top of the Great Wall.

Immediately, the cultivators of the five legions saw Bai Lin and the thirteen brightly glowing pill furnaces, and thought back to the incredible scene which had played out only days before.

At that point, Bai Lin let out a powerful roar as he flung all thirteen of the pill furnaces out onto the battlefield.

The war recently had been playing out differently than usual, and the fighting had been going on this entire time. In the first stage of the conflict, the Wildlanders probed and harassed the Great Wall. Then they tampered with the Underworld River. And now, they were even drawing upon entire tribes of savages.

Although there weren't a huge number of tribes involved at the moment, there were a lot more present than usual. Furthermore, the savage tribes were currently in the middle of a major assault in which more than 10,000 savages joined together in a charge. In addition, they were surrounded by massive hordes of souls from the Underworld River.

Within that vast sea of souls were certain unique souls who were different and more powerful than the others, and it was with madness and ferocity that they hurtled toward the Great Wall and the shield.

The magical cannons on top of the Great Wall itself were being fired constantly, cutting through swath after swath of the enemy. It was in this moment that Bai Xiaochun's thirteen pill furnaces were hurled out.

Each one of the thirteen furnaces was only about three meters tall. Compared to the battlefield as a whole, they were very tiny. However, the intense red color with which they shone, coupled with the wild aura which spread out from them, instantly caught

the attention of both the five legions and the savages.

As the pill furnaces flew through the air, many of the savages' faces fell. Those were ones who, although they had not seen the three pill furnaces a few days before, had heard the stories of the soul-exterminating magical items that the Great Wall forces were now using.

Because the exploding furnaces were a new development, the Wildlands forces had not yet devised a way to deal with them. All they could do was watch as the pill furnaces sailed through the air, then landed onto the ground with deafening booms.

The ground trembled as flames rushed out in all directions, along with blasts of energy that rolled along like tsunamis.

Even more shocking was the soul-shredding power contained within the blasts. That was the medicinal effect of the Soul Convergence Pills, which spread out to fill a 30,000-meter area. Within that area, all vengeful souls screamed in terror, but were unable to flee. Within the blink of an eye, the energy swept over them, completely destroying them!

It was a force that could not be defended against, and moved with incredible speed. From a distance, it almost looked like a pair of hands wiping away everything within that 30,000-meter area!

Moments later, those areas were completely empty....

The members of the savage tribes were flabbergasted. At the same time, at a location some distance away from the Great Wall itself was an area protected by spell formations and filled with ragged tents. In the middle of that area was a black altar floating in the air, upon which an old man sat cross-legged. Currently, his eyes were shining with disbelief and fury.

The source of that fury was an image he was looking at, projected onto a screen of water. Clearly visible was that empty, 30,000-meter area right outside the Great Wall!

Chapter 480: Promotion To Lieutenant

The plain covered by the spell formation was vast, and was filled with black mists and countless vengeful souls whose screams echoed about and caused the mists to seethe and churn.

However, that was only on the borders of the mist-filled area. In the middle was the location filled with dilapidated tents, apparently created from the hides of enormous beasts. There were so many of the tents that they were virtually impossible to number, even from a distance.

Within each tent lurked numerous savage giants, clad in hide garments. Some of them were sleeping, others would occasionally walk here and there among the tents. Whenever any of them looked in the direction of the center of the enormous camp, expressions of awe would appear on their faces. Furthermore, if the giants happened to cross glances, they seemed to have to force themselves to hold back from fighting. Apparently, they were extremely violent and short-tempered. Any of them who couldn't hold their temper and actually began to fight would quickly be separated by streams of divine sense sent out by the tribal chiefs.

The camp was split up into ten areas according to the tribes, and although the giants all looked similar, they had clear differences in skin tone and eye color.

In addition to the giants were the beasts, which were kept beyond the tens of thousands of tents. Each beast was secured by iron chains, and occasionally let out thunderous roars that shook heaven and earth.

In the very center of the tents was a circular area demarcated by a ring of more than a thousand 9-meter-tall black boulders that emitted intense pressure in all directions. In fact, the air for 30,000 meters in all directions rippled and distorted because of it, seemingly carving that area out of the world itself.

Obviously, the black boulders were no mere decorations, but had some sort of magical function!

Occasionally, people could be seen walking into and out of the shimmering light cast by the boulders!

Although such cultivators were not dressed in expensive, extravagant clothing, they were clearly different from the giants. They were good-looking, well-washed and clean!

Clearly, these were none other than... Wildlands soul cultivators!!

Whenever such soul cultivators emerged from the central area in the tents, the savage giants who saw them would drop to their knees and kowtow respectfully.

In the Wildlands, soul cultivators occupied a high position, almost like nobility. They were almost like gods who enslaved the savages and commanded the seas of souls.

Also in the middle of the ring of black boulders... floating in midair... was a black altar!

“Dammit!!” The old man sitting on the altar had a very unsightly expression on his face, and his eyes burned with fury as he watched the scene playing out on the water screen. Thirteen pill furnaces sailed out from behind the Great Wall, then exploded, completely razing a 30,000-meter area.

The looks of fear on the faces of the savages were clearly visible, and as for the vengeful souls, they were clearly terrified....

“Pill furnaces....” the old man murmured, his eyes flashing with hatred. This was his second time seeing pill furnaces thrown out from behind the Great Wall. Of course, what was most shocking was not the explosions themselves, but the medicinal strength of the pills inside of them!

Although it was impossible to say what those pills were, they were terrifyingly effective at handling vengeful souls.

“How can we carry out the grand elder’s plan this way...? We need to get that Chen Hetian outside of the Great Wall and then kill him....” The old man frowned. He was sure that it wouldn't take long for the tribal chiefs among the savages to realize the implication of this development.

With those terrifying pill furnaces being used, the sea of souls would be of little help. As such, the savage giants would have no backup, and it would be difficult to force them to charge into battle.

Back on the battlefield outside the Great Wall, the sudden appearance of a 30,000-meter area of emptiness resulted in complete silence. Atop the Great Wall, the cultivators of the five legions all gasped, their eyes going wide and their jaws dropping.

Then, a huge commotion broke out.

“Were those... the same type of pill furnaces as last time?”

“Heavens! This time was even more shocking than last time. Thirteen exploding pill furnaces really devastated the sea of souls!!”

“The countless vengeful souls... are clearly terrified!!”

After all, everyone had seen dear friends injured and killed in the fighting. Because of that, their emotions were running particularly high, and many of them turned in the direction of the Skin Flayers’ district, their eyes shining with bright light.

After that, the fighting continued. However, it was clear that the savages and the vengeful souls were slightly hesitant compared to before. Occasionally, they would look up into the sky, seemingly fearful of descending pill furnaces.

Bai Lin was thrilled as he turned and headed off of the wall. Back in the Armory, Bai Xiaochun was standing there looking absentmindedly at the unexploded pill furnaces, wondering what was happening outside the Great Wall.

However, the situation in the city was the same now as it had been before. Unless something incredibly shocking happened, like the previous appearance of the Underworld River, people inside the Great Wall wouldn't be able to hear anything about what was happening on the outside.

Bai Lin soon came whistling through the air toward Bai Xiaochun, and before he even arrived, his laughter filled the air. As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard that laughter, his heart calmed, and he struck a lofty pose. Clasp ing his hands behind his back, he stood there looking like a transcendent being, elegant and graceful to the extreme.

“Bai, my boy, you did wonderful!” As Bai Lin touched down, excitement could still be seen on his face as he waved his hand, sending a violet command medallion with the Skin Flayers' sigil on it flying toward Bai Xiaochun.

“The five legions of the Hall of Steel Veins have clear punishments and rewards in place. Bai Xiaochun, your success in the Dao of medicine has earned you the right to lead ten soldiers. Henceforth, you are a lieutenant of the Skin Flayers!”

Considering that Bai Xiaochun was new to the Great Wall, he wasn't completely familiar with everything, and didn't know much about the position of lieutenant. However, the four young guards who had been watching over them immediately cast envious glances at the violet command medallion.

All of them had been members of the Skin Flayers for years already, and still had not reached the rank of lieutenant. And yet, Bai Xiaochun had just barely arrived, and was already being promoted.

In any other circumstance, they would have found this hard to accept. However, the fear inspired in them by the exploding pill furnaces ensured that, after merely exchanging a few glances among themselves, they all admitted it was reasonable.

“Not only does that command medallion represent your position in the Skin Flayers, it also will keep a record of your battle credits. The number of enemies killed by each of your exploding pill furnaces will be collected there!” The approval in Bai Lin’s eyes couldn’t have been clearer, and the truth was that were it not for the strict rules in the five legions, he would have directly promoted Bai Xiaochun to the rank of captain.

“Lieutenant?” Bai Xiaochun murmured, accepting the violet command medallion. When he did, something warm spread out from the medallion and entered his body, instantly enlivening him. As of that moment, he realized that this command medallion was no ordinary item. After merging it with his divine sense, he could sense a strange connection between himself and the enormous, towering pagoda in the middle of Great Wall City.

“That’s right,” Bai Lin said. “Don’t underestimate the rank of lieutenant. As of now, you can select ten cultivators from the army to be your personal entourage. They will have no choice but to follow any and all orders you give them!” After giving a bit more encouragement, Bai Lin said that he hoped Bai Xiaochun would be able to make more exploding pill furnaces, and increasingly powerful ones at that. Finally, he left.

Bai Xiaochun stood there looking at the lieutenant’s command medallion for a moment before blinking a few times and looking up at the four young guards. Immediately, the four of them stepped forward and saluted solemnly.

“Greetings, Lieutenant!”

Feeling wonderful, Bai Xiaochun looked over the group of four, then glanced down at the command medallion momentarily. Clearing his throat, he looked at the young men and said, “You’ve been stationed here for some time, and yet I don’t know your names.”

“Zhao Long, at your service!”

“Sun Li, at your service!”

“Xu Deshan, at your service!”

“Zhou Wu, at your service!”

Considering everything these four young men had seen over the past several days, and the fact that Bai Xiaochun was now a lieutenant, they looked him with solemn expressions of awe. That was especially true of Zhao Long, who was in the late Core Formation stage, and seemed especially in awe of Bai Xiaochun. Part of that was because he was the very same young man who had been blasted off into parts unknown a few days before....

“From now on, you four are under my command. We have six more spots open, so I’ll let you four handle that. Hurry up and find the right people. With me in charge, we will advance triumphantly to the highest of heights!” Bai Xiaochun felt that the words he had just spoken were quite extraordinary and inspiring.

Zhao Long and his companions could see that Bai Xiaochun was on the rise, and that following him was a good choice for them. After a moment of hesitation, they exchanged glances, then voiced their assent and left to find more cultivators.

After they were gone, Bai Xiaochun began to inspect the pill furnaces again. Around evening, Zhao Long and the other returned, six cultivators in tow. Four were men and two were women, and all of them were looking curiously at Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 481: Lining One's Pockets...

This group of six all had extraordinary cultivation bases. After saluting Bai Xiaochun, they offered their names and stated the levels of their cultivation bases. Four were in early Core Formation, one was in the mid stage, and one was in the late stage, the latter being one of the young women.

Her name was Liu Li. She was pretty, with phoenix-like eyes set in a young face. Despite her youthful appearance, she was buxom in a way that her armor couldn't hide. In fact, her armor had been crafted in a way that made her look good-looking, and even heroic.

Bai Xiaochun was the lieutenant of the squad, with Zhao Long and Liu Li being the next strongest, and his immediate subordinates. Already, their group was strong enough to shake almost the entire Middle Reaches cultivation world.

Furthermore, from what Bai Xiaochun could tell, this group of ten were all friends with each other. Presumably, they had met in some other part of the army, and got along quite well. Most likely, they also had the ability to form and operate a spell formation. With their combined power, it would probably be possible for them to tangle with someone in the Nascent Soul stage, and if not defeat them, at least cause them quite a headache in battle!

As Bai Xiaochun sized them up, they were doing the same to him. The truth was just as Bai Xiaochun had suspected; they had long since been a small team. Zhao Long's suggestion, plus the fact that they had personally witnessed the pill furnaces exploding on the other side of the wall, convinced them that becoming followers of this mysterious apothecary would be a good thing for them.

Unfortunately, now that they were actually laying eyes on him for the first time, they were a bit let down. Not only did he seem quite young, but there was something that made him seem somehow untrustworthy.

Bai Xiaochun gave a few words of explanation about his requirements and then, considering that it was already evening, gave them the rest of the day off. From this day forth, they would live in his courtyard, and would be responsible for carrying out all of his commands.

During the night, the fighting still went on outside of the Great Wall. However, because of the spell formation shield, Great Wall City itself was very quiet.

Bai Xiaochun sat quietly in his residence, looking at this lieutenant's command medallion. After a moment, he sent some divine sense into it, and once again felt the connection between himself and the huge eye on top of the pagoda.

At the same time, he branded the medallion with his life sense, causing it to flicker with violet light. Moments later, he was able to see his accumulated battle credit.

"43,753?" he murmured.

"Lieutenants are pretty impressive. But if I could become a captain, it would probably be even more impressive. Then I could command a hundred cultivators." Filled with anticipation at the thought, he decided to check the requirements to get a promotion to captain.

"1,000,000?" His jaw dropped.

"That's way too much...." he thought, frowning. Then, he read further into the matter, and his frown deepened.

"There are different rewards for exterminating vengeful souls than there are for killing savages. And you get even more battle credit for taking out soul cultivators and necromancers." At this point, his eyes began to shine.

"Well, no need to get antsy. I can get battle credit by just making exploding pill furnaces, right? Doing that is a piece of cake. It all comes down to Soul Convergence Pills!

“If I could concoct a truly powerful Soul Convergence Pill, then I could rake in a whole bunch of battle credit with almost no effort!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun felt more excited than ever.

Of course, battle credit was good for more than just getting promotions. Therefore, he decided to check what items were available for purchase.

All you had to do was go to the tower and meet the requirements of the eye, and then whatever you wanted was yours.

After a moment of silence, he murmured. “I really don’t have enough battle credit at the moment.”

With that, he decided to check his cultivation base.

“I’m not too far from being at the great circle of the Gold Core stage. Sadly, the spiritual energy here is too weak. It won’t be very easy to speed up my cultivation that way.... If I got enough military credit, though, I could easily get my hands on some cultivation resources.” After some thought, he sent some divine sense out to confirm that no one was in the area watching him. Then he produced a handful of paper talismans which he set up around his residence.

Then he guiltily opened up his bag of holding and pulled out some earthspirit tubers!

The earthspirit tubers were completely golden, and were covered with countless ringed lines which could be used to determine their age. Each tuber had more than a hundred of them.

“They’re all more than a hundred years old....” he thought, licking his lips. The truth was that, although he did need these tubers to concoct Soul Convergence Pills, he didn’t need very many.

The reason he had requested a thousand of them, as well as certain other precious medicinal plants, was that he planned to

secretly keep a few for himself, and use them to increase the power of his qi and blood, and also strengthen his life force.

After all, life force was key to cultivating his Undying Live Forever Technique.

“With these earthspirit tubers, my Undying Tendons should advance by leaps and bounds!” Even a single hundred-year-old earthspirit tuber would fetch an astronomical price if sold publicly. In fact, in auctions, they would usually be classified as precious materials of heaven and earth.

In Great Wall City, only someone like Bai Lin would be able to acquire so many at the drop of a hat. Bai Xiaochun could only imagine how he'd done it. A huge price must have been paid to get the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to part with a thousand of them.

With such thoughts on his mind, he looked around again to make sure that no one was spying on him. Then he took one of the earthspirit tubers and performed a spirit enhancement using his turtle-wok. After all, he had also requested fuel for numerous different types of multi-colored flame. Almost immediately, the earthspirit tuber was even more extraordinary than it had been before.

Unfortunately, he only had enough fuel to enhance a few more. When he finally gave up, he picked up one of the spirit enhanced earthspirit tubers and took a bite.

He suddenly felt like he was right back in the Ovens, causing his heart to swell.

“I wonder how Eldest Brother is doing back on Sky Quarter Rainbow?” he thought. Suddenly he recalled everyone he knew back in the River-Defying Sect, such as Li Qinghou, Hou Xiaomei, and Song Junwan. All sorts of memories floated up in his mind.

At the same time, he felt his life force surging hotter and hotter until it was like a fire. He immediately began to work with his

Undying Live Forever Technique, causing the Undying Tendons in his left leg to become like a black hole, sucking in all of the heat.

The night passed quickly, during which time Bai Xiaochun consumed the entire hundred-year-old earthspirit tuber. Anyone else who did something like that would find their life force surging with incredible vitality.

But Bai Xiaochun was different. His Undying Live Forever Technique almost seemed like a bottomless pit. Thankfully, the Undying Tendons on his left leg were almost complete, and he was even beginning to develop his right leg.

Soon, he could sense that his fleshly body power was increasing with incredible intensity.

When the light of day spread out, he began to concoct medicine again. This time, he didn't fall behind at all, but instead, increased to fifty batches. Thanks to the constant testing, he was making some progress toward a more powerful Soul Convergence Pill, and yet, was not pleased with the results. So far, nothing seemed to have reached the ultimate level that he knew was possible. However, he wasn't in a hurry, and was convinced that his tests would soon lead to a complete success.

Besides, with every day that passed, pill furnaces continued to detonate.

As far as Bai Lin was concerned, everything was going great. In fact, at one point when Bai Xiaochun was worried that he would run out of pill furnaces, Bai Lin had a whole new batch delivered....

General Bai had long since fallen in love with the exploding furnaces. To him, they weren't tools for concocting medicine, they were weapons to harvest vengeful souls!

As time went by, Bai Xiaochun continued to work on his cultivation. Eventually, he found that he had gone through so many earthspirit tubers that he only had a few dozen left.

That night, his entire right leg seemed to burn with incredible heat, and to pulse with incredible power. Rumbling sounds echoed out, causing everything in the area to shake.

“It worked!” he thought excitedly. As of this moment, he could sense a terrifying fleshly body power radiating from both of his legs!

In combination with the Undying Hex, he was confident that not even a Nascent Soul cultivator could catch up with him now, at least not without using a minor teleportation! Bursting into motion, he sped to a location 3,000 meters away in his courtyard, and by the time he had come to a rest and was standing there, the sound of his movement still hadn’t reached his ears!

“Faster than the speed of sound!” Elated, Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

Chapter 482: Ji Feng

The sound of Bai Xiaochun's voice echoing out in the courtyard attracted the attention of Liu Li, Zhao Long, and the others. Expressions flickering, they all rushed out to see what was happening.

As soon as they approached, they could sense the powerful fluctuations in the air, prickling against their skin, apparently the result of something passing by with incredible speed.

Then they saw Bai Xiaochun off in the distance, laughing uproariously, and they gasped, exchanging glances of astonishment and disbelief.

All of them could tell at a glance that Bai Xiaochun must have been testing out some new technique, something that involved moving with incredible speed.

Liu Li looked at Bai Xiaochun a bit more deeply, then murmured to herself, "Who would ever have thought that Apothecary Bai would have a secret magic like that...?"

She, along with Zhao Long and the others, all clasped hands in salute.

Bai Xiaochun was quite pleased to see the astonishment in the eyes of Zhao Long and the others. Clearing his throat, he gave some words of encouragement regarding a few things, then strutted back into his residence.

Zhao Long and the others were significantly affected by what had just occurred. Days later, they would still think back to what had happened, and feel their hearts trembling. That was especially true of Liu Li and Zhao Long. Being in late Core Formation, they felt especially taken aback.

"That speed... it couldn't just be a secret magic. It would also require shocking levels of fleshly body power...."

“With unbelievable speed like that, an ordinary fist strike would be like a divine ability!”

As time passed, Bai Lin continued to come collect pill furnaces, which he would send over the Great Wall to explode on the battlefield. Each explosion would rouse the hearts of the five legions. That was especially true considering that the power and effectiveness of the exploding furnaces increased every day. Of course, that made them only that much more of a headache for the Wildlands savages.

The pill furnaces mostly targeted the vengeful souls, and didn't just converge them together in one spot, but rather, wiped them out of existence. The destructive power of the explosions ensured that the once boundless sea of souls outside the Great Wall was slowly showing signs of weakening.

Were it not for the fact that this campaign was backed by ten tribes of savages, as well as soul cultivators and necromancers, then the souls would most likely have already dissipated.

The Wildlands were in a very tight situation at the moment, and couldn't think of any good strategies to turn the tables. Of course, they had no way of knowing that it was all due to the fact that Bai Xiaochun was now working for the five legions. On one occasion, Bai Lin took Bai Xiaochun up to the wall to experience for himself the power of the exploding pill furnaces. Of course, that was only after Bai Lin swore up and down that there wouldn't be any danger at all.

As soon as he set foot on the wall itself, he could sense the countless gazes of the cultivators of the five legions, gazes filled with respect and awe.

Bai Xiaochun immediately fell in love with the sensation. Being in the center of the public eye made him feel very much like a true hero....

From that day on, whenever Bai Lin came to take the pill

furnaces away, Bai Xiaochun would go along to witness the explosions.

When he saw the blasts of energy, and heard the deafening booms, it lifted his spirits to the maximum. Furthermore, with each explosion, the battle credit in his command medallion rose higher, which got him even more excited.

“This is definitely the place for me!” Bai Xiaochun looked out at all the craters beyond the Great Wall, the infuriated savages, the recoiling sea of souls, and swished his sleeve. “With a single massive snap of my finger,” he mused proudly, “I can destroy anything and everything.”

An entire month flew by, during which time the sea of souls continued to grow thinner. It was something that had not occurred for many years, and got the cultivators in Great Wall City into very high spirits. Conversely, the Wildlands forces were now paying closer attention to the situation than ever.

“I have over 300,000 battle credits!” Bai Xiaochun murmured. Every day, he would check to see how much his battle credit had increased, and was always pleased with the result. From what he could tell, he was definitely making enough to sustain his cultivation.

One afternoon when Bai Xiaochun had just sealed fifty pill furnaces, he didn't stand there watching them like he usually did. Instead, he swaggered out of the Armory and headed toward the huge pagoda in the middle of the city.

Not only did that pagoda operate the city's grand spell formation, it was also where the five legions would go to spend battle credit. Therefore, it was a very important place.

It was only natural that a place like that was also the dwelling place of a deva. Generally speaking, cultivators from the five legions could be seen coming and going there on a daily basis.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun showed up at the pagoda, people recognized him. All of them seemed to view him favorably, and would salute him with clasped hands. Bai Xiaochun called out greetings in return, sighing at how popular he was.

Upon reaching the pagoda itself, he sent out some divine sense to check what items were available for purchase. It was in that moment that cries of shock rose up around him, and a bright beam of light appeared up above. That light shot down with incredible speed, surrounded by a frigid coldness that was shocking on a deep level.

“It’s Ji Feng!”

“Of all the cultivators in the great circle of Core Formation in the five legions, he’s the one most likely to get promoted to major general! Ji Feng!”

“I haven’t seen him for a long time. I heard he was sent out on a secret mission outside the Great Wall, to infiltrate the Wildlands and gather intelligence!”

As the discussions went on, the beam of light faded away, and a young man appeared, clad in a blood-colored suit of armor. He had long black hair, and a handsome face that was marred by a long scar which ran from the top of his forehead down to the corner of his mouth, and transformed his good looks into something grotesque! As he hovered there in midair, he completely ignored everyone around him as he stared up at the huge eye atop the pagoda.

Down on the ground, Bai Xiaochun looked up at Ji Feng. He didn’t recognize him, but something about the strength of his cultivation base reminded him of Zhao Tianjiao.

“He must be a famous person like Zhao Tianjiao....” he thought.

Ji Feng had terrifying cultivation base ripples, and a murderous aura that was more powerful than anyone Bai Xiaochun had seen

in the five legions other than Bai Lin. And considering that Bai Lin was half a step into the Deva Realm, that was very telling.

“A fiendish killer!” Bai Xiaochun thought with an inner gasp. Although Ji Feng seemed intimidating, Bai Xiaochun wasn't convinced that he would lose to him in a fight. After all, fiendish killers like this guy were usually the crazy type. Just when Bai Xiaochun was about to look away, Ji Feng waved his hand in the direction of the huge eye.

That motion caused a vast quantity of vengeful souls to pour out of his sleeve. There were more than 10,000 of them, screaming and struggling. However, once the gaze of the eye locked onto them, they were sucked up, and in the blink of an eye, had been absorbed.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped.

Simultaneously, expressions of astonishment could be heard in the area.

“Elder Brother Ji Feng just offered a sacrifice of 10,000 vengeful souls!”

“Not many people increase their battle credit by offering a sacrifice in such a way. Only top experts like Ji Feng can pull off something like that.”

“There were more than 10,000 vengeful souls, but in terms of quality, they were varied. I'm afraid his battle credit will only increase by a few tens of thousands.”

Even as the discussions continued, Ji Feng turned and blurred into motion, speeding off into the distance. As for Bai Xiaochun, it was only at this point that he finally realized you could earn battle credit in such a fashion.

“What a pity. Right now, my exploding pill furnaces simply tear the vengeful souls to shreds. If I could use Ji Feng's method, I could earn even more battle credit.” Sighing, he shook his head.

After giving a final glance to Ji Feng disappearing in the distance, he poured some divine sense into his command medallion, establishing a link with the huge eye.

A moment later, all sorts of information appeared in his mind.

“I can’t believe you can trade for so much stuff here.... They even have Nascent Soul Pills....” Considering the shocking fact that Nascent Soul Pills were for sale, then it was no surprise at all that they had the type of medicinal pills that could help during the Gold Core stage.

There were also magical items, paper talismans, and medicinal plants of all types. Bai Xiaochun’s heart was already pounding with excitement.

Many of the items were unique to this location, such as soul grasses from the Wildlands, and even... Underworld River water!

The Underworld River was illusory in nature, almost like something that belonged to another world. It had very unique properties, and was difficult to summon. In fact, other than devas, no one could manipulate it.

Chapter 483: I'll Make Your Pill Furnaces A Thing Of The Past!

“Underworld River water....” Although Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure what that type of water could be used for, he could see that a single drop was extremely expensive. Obviously, it was something very useful for cultivators.

“Perhaps cultivators want Underworld River water... the same way Wildlands soul cultivators want Heavenspan River water?” Although Bai Xiaochun hadn't been at the Great Wall for very long, he had heard that in the Wildlands, Heavenspan River water was extremely valuable.

Because of that, quite a few people would smuggle it out into the Wildlands to trade with the soul cultivators. Although the practice was strictly forbidden, it was impossible to prevent it from happening altogether.

There was even a black market within Great Wall City itself. However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't interested in that.

What he was interested in were Nascent Soul Pills!

He quickly found the listing for Nascent Soul Pills, and when he saw the price attached to it, he couldn't help but gasp. Earlier, he had assumed that he had a good amount of battle credit built up. However, after seeing how expensive things were, he felt really bad for himself.

“Nascent Soul Pills cost millions of battle credits....” Looking sadly at his violet identity medallion, he sighed. After all, Nascent Soul Pills had other uses than just breaking through to the Nascent Soul stage. They served the general function of increasing one's cultivation base level, and therefore, could also be used to break through to the great circle of Core Formation.

The reason for that was that the main way Nascent Soul Pills

helped with breakthroughs was by means of providing power through the medicinal ingredients. However, only some of those ingredients were specifically for the purpose of forming the Nascent Soul itself. At the moment, what Bai Xiaochun cared most about was the extra power the pills could provide.

“One pill.... With one Nascent Soul Pill, I could probably get to the great circle of the Gold Core stage!” At the moment, Bai Xiaochun had to give up on the idea of purchasing a Nascent Soul Pill. Instead, he bought some other high-grade medicinal pills useful for the Core Formation stage, as well as some magical items he needed, then left.

After returning to his residence, he sealed the place thoroughly and then took out his turtle-wok and performed sixfold spirit enhancements on everything he had just purchased, as well as some other items in his bag of holding.

After he was finished, he looked hesitantly at the numerous designs on the objects he had enhanced.

“I only have two sets of seven-colored flame fuel, and one set for eight-colored flame.... That’s all Bai Lin could give me.” Back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he had tried to track down fuel for various levels of multi-colored flame, but hadn’t been successful. At that point, he had come to understand that seven-colored flame fuel was possible to find, but when it came to eight-colored flame fuel, it was very rare.

It had probably been difficult for Bai Lin just to get this one set.

After a moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun pulled a jade box out of his bag of holding, opened it, and examined the contents. Inside was a fingernail-sized stone that initially seemed completely ordinary in nature. However, it was possible to sense a shocking power within that stone, power that could be unleashed by the smallest bit of friction.

That stone was none other than eight-colored flame fuel!

After studying it for a bit, he carefully closed the lid of the jade box and shook his head.

“I need to hold onto this eight-colored flame fuel,” he thought, “and only use it on a really good magical item.” After putting away the eight-colored flame fuel, he began to consume the medicinal pills he’d just enhanced.

As he did, spiritual power began to course through him, transforming into strands of frigid qi that gathered inside of his Gold Core.

Another month flew by.

The higher Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base grew, the easier it became to concoct medicine. He continued to produce successful batches of Soul Convergence Pills, and although he wasn’t very happy with the outcome, the final versions continued to improve compared to his original version.

Bai Xiaochun was certain that it wouldn’t be long before he would be able to produce a satisfactory Soul Convergence Pill. Furthermore, he had decided that the best option was to wait until he made a significant improvement before presenting the pill to Bai Lin.

By now, Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with his life in Great Wall City. Not only did everyone respect him, but the pill furnaces being constantly tossed over the wall and exploding among the enemy caused his battle credits to increase on a daily basis.

His exploding furnaces were now one of the deadliest weapons at the disposal of the Skin Flayers, and were a source of great pressure for the Wildlander necromancers.

Were it not for the fact that this was a large-scale assault, the Wildlands forces would have long since retreated. Whenever Bai Xiaochun went out to personally witness the devastating effects of his exploding furnaces, he could sense that the fighting was

continuing to intensify.

By this point, it wasn't just a single savage tribe who was participating in the offensive... there were now six of them. Before, there had been about 10,000 savages on the battlefield, but now there were around 80,000. It had been many decades since a battle this large had been fought in the war.

Whenever the savage giants roared and charged into battle, all heaven and earth would shake violently.

Furthermore... more and more soul cultivators were showing up to fight. The cultivators of the five legions took them very seriously, and would often send out their most powerful experts to contend with them.

However, the soul cultivators were always under the protection of large groups of savage giants, and although a few of them were successfully taken down, they never went out without a fierce fight.

Both sides ended up suffering casualties, although it was generally worse for the Wildlands. After all, the five legions had the Great Wall to protect them, and most importantly, the exploding pill furnaces were wreaking havoc on the mostly unintelligent vengeful souls.

Were it not for the pill furnaces, the vengeful souls, who didn't fear extermination at all, would have posed a huge problem for the five legions.

By this point, there was virtually no one among the forces of Great Wall City who hadn't heard of Bai Xiaochun. Also... his name was spreading outside of the Great Wall as well. Many of the savage tribes were now aware of who he was, and that the magical items which were so useful against the vengeful souls were created by none other than him!

In fact, he had already been placed onto the Wildlands' Execution

List, and was in the top 100!

All the people above him on the list were incredibly famous individuals who the Wildlands hated deeply.

It couldn't be stated that Bai Xiaochun had completely changed the course of the war. A few exploding furnaces couldn't do something like that. However... he had influenced the state of battle, and that effect continued to grow as time passed!

Furthermore, the chiefs of the savage tribes, as well as the necromancers, all hated him with a vengeance!

The chiefs mourned those who had been lost among their various tribes, and the necromancers, who were a proud and lofty lot, were now forced to spend almost all their time keeping the vengeful souls under control.

Generally speaking, controlling these souls should have involved simply directing their momentum. After all, the souls which poured directly out of the Underworld River were particularly fierce. But now... the threat of the exploding furnaces made the souls very difficult to control. Some of them tried to flee, and others even tried to fight back against those controlling them.

Currently, a meeting was taking place on the vast plain with the more than 1,000 black stones.

Surrounding the black-robed old man on the floating black altar were ten figures. All of them wore gray robes, and emanated terrifying fluctuations which identified them as none other than necromancers!

One of them was speaking to the old man in a raspy voice.

“Exalted emissary, we can't keep going on like this. We have to do something to resolve the situation!!”

In addition to the necromancers, there were also ten giants on the altar, all of whom seemed extremely ancient. They looked different from the other giants, larger and far more intelligent.

One of those ancient giants looked at the black-robed old man and slowly said, “I agree, exalted emissary. If things keep going on like this, the warriors of our tribe will lose the protection offered by the tide of souls. Without that protection, they’re no match for the cultivators on the wall! Exalted emissary, please use your divine abilities to put an end to this catastrophe!”

Considering what the necromancers and the tribal chiefs were saying, the old man thought for a moment, and then responded in a sinister voice, “We can’t waste too much soul power before the appointed time....

“However, don’t worry. I’ve already made some preparations, and I think the time is right to make a move. Pay close attention to the battle tomorrow. I’m going to make Bai Xiaochun’s pill furnaces a thing of the past!”

Chapter 484: Bai Xiaochun's Fury!

Bai Xiaochun was sitting cross-legged inside Great Wall City, feeling very uneasy, although he wasn't sure why. Suddenly, his eyes snapped open, and he looked around with a strange expression on his face. However, after a moment passed, nothing happened, so he went back to cultivation.

Eventually, when the sun was setting, he finally let out a long breath and then emerged from his residence.

Clearing his throat, he said, "Bring the furnaces over!"

Instantly, Liu Li, Zhao Long, and the rest of his squad all sprang into action and began setting up fifty pill furnaces in a circle around him.

By now, they had grown used to Bai Xiaochun's ways, and how famous he had become now that he was on the Wildlands' Execution List.

At the same time, he had treated them well, bestowing medicinal pills and magical items upon them frequently. After all, despite not having a huge accumulation of battle credit, he did get more and more on a daily basis, and was not the stingy type. He wanted everyone around him to be just as happy as he was.

Therefore, Zhao Long and the others didn't mind being ordered around. After setting up the pill furnaces, they took their places to stand guard.

After things were set up, Bai Xiaochun nodded in satisfaction. Waving his hand, he opened all of the pill furnaces, and then sent large quantities of medicinal plants flying out. As was his usual custom, he made unique adjustments to all fifty of the medicine formulas.

The pill furnaces began to heat up, whereupon Bai Xiaochun began to walk amongst them, occasionally adding ingredients to a

furnace here, or adjusting the heat to a furnace there. After about two hours had passed, all the proper adjustments had been made, and he began to seal the furnaces.

As Bai Xiaochun sealed pill furnaces, Zhao Long and the others exchanged glances, and then began to whisper among themselves.

“I wonder how many will explode this time?”

“I bet it will be twenty or less!”

“Yesterday, seventeen blew up, so I bet that it will be more than twenty today!”

This was how things usually went....

After sealing all of the furnaces, Bai Xiaochun brushed off his hands and walked back into his residence, paying the furnaces no more heed.

Another eight hours passed, after which one of the pill furnaces began to emit cracking sounds. As usual, Bai Lin showed up, whereupon Bai Xiaochun ended his session of cultivation and walked out to meet him.

“Thank you for your hard work, Grandmaster Bai,” Bai Lin said with a smile. He viewed Bai Xiaochun more favorably with each day that passed.

“It’s no trouble at all,” Bai Xiaochun replied grandly, looking very much like an important hero. “I do everything for the Great Wall! However, I have to say, Old Bai, I’m almost out of pill furnaces, and am running very low on medicinal plants, especially earthspirit tubers. Next time, bring a few more than usual.”

“No problem. I’ll handle it right away!” Bai Lin continued to watch the furnaces with sparkling eyes until more cracking sounds began to ring out. With every pill furnace that began to show signs of exploding, Bai Lin would get more excited. Furthermore, in order to ensure that they would all explode at the same time, he would often draw upon the power of his cultivation base to

suppress the more unstable ones.

Eventually, when twenty-seven pill furnaces were on the verge of exploding, and the others clearly weren't, Bai Lin laughed heartily, flicked his sleeve, and shot toward the Great Wall with the furnaces.

As usual, Bai Xiaochun flew along behind him to see what would happen on the battlefield. After all, such direct observations of the exploding furnaces helped a lot when it came to adjusting his medicine formulas.

Bai Lin knew that Bai Xiaochun liked to watch the explosions personally, so he flew slow enough that he could follow along. When they both reached the Great Wall, Bai Lin flung the twenty-seven furnaces out in twenty-seven different directions.

When the cultivators of the five legions saw what was happening, they began to cheer in support. In contrast, the savages down on the battlefield gritted their teeth and began to back up. As for the vengeful souls, once the pill furnaces appeared, they became almost impossible for the necromancers to control, and instinctively began to scatter.

The mere sight of what was happening before the pill furnaces detonated left Bai Xiaochun feeling quite wonderful. However....

Even as the savages and souls began to flee, a dozen or so sphere-shaped beasts suddenly flew out onto the battlefield.

They moved with incredible speed, and at the same time, expanded rapidly, becoming a dozen 30-meter-tall spheroids that shot toward the incoming pill furnaces.

As they closed in, the spheroid beasts opened their mouths wide. Next, intense sucking sounds could be heard as the pill furnaces were suddenly wrenched in their direction.

The unexpected development occurred so quickly that before anyone on the Great Wall had a chance to react, the spheroid

beasts had gobbled up all of the pill furnaces!

Moments later, muffled thuds could be heard from inside them. The creatures bulged, and their eyes went wide, but after a moment, nothing else happened, and they actually just closed their eyes again.

Then, they slowly deflated, returning to their original size. Finally, they opened their mouths and burped out wisps of black smoke, which slowly faded away in the wind.

The entire battlefield went silent. The cultivators on the wall looked on with wide eyes, and Bai Lin stood there trembling, the killing intent in his eyes rising rapidly.

The dozen spheroid beasts were all surrounded by rippling distortions that indicated that they were under the protection of powerful guardians. If Bai Lin personally went out to try to deal with him, he would be in great danger, and the rest of the forces on the wall would be forced to decide whether or not to come out to aid him.

“Dammit!” Bai Lin growled, the killing intent in his eyes growing stronger. By this point, he had come to understand that the Wildlanders’ goal in this entire campaign was to get deva patriarch Chen Hetian to come out of the city. If that happened, a trap would likely be sprung in an attempt to kill him.

“I never could have guessed that they would come up with a way to deal with the pill furnaces in less than half a year. Those weird beasts have obviously been mutated recently....” Even as Bai Lin sighed darkly, the savages outside the wall began to cackle madly. As for the vengeful souls, their murderous auras grew even more intense, and they once again began to charge across the battlefield.

This time, the charge was made with more intense violence than before. Booms instantly rang out, along with miserable screams.

The cultivators of the five legions could do little more than steel

themselves and once again fight to defend the Great Wall.

As of this moment, few people were paying any attention at all to Bai Xiaochun; everyone knew that his exploding pill furnaces had been rendered useless.

To see the pill furnaces that he had so painstakingly prepared for detonation be consumed just like that first left Bai Xiaochun staring in mute shock. It was almost as if his mind had been smashed with a sledgehammer.

“How could this be happening? What kind of beasts are those?!?!?” He felt as if his heart were in physical pain.

“No more battle credit? No more medicinal plants? No more pill furnaces? And on top of it all, I wasted a whole bunch of time and energy on concocting medicine!!” Bai Xiaochun let out a bellow of anger, his eyes completely bloodshot.

At the moment, he felt like someone had just ruined his life. Without battle credit income like he had before, his dreams of being promoted to captain would be completely dashed.

When he thought of that, his anger grew even hotter.

Furthermore, having his pill furnaces destroyed right in front of all the other cultivators was like a slap to the face, and was a severe blow to his self-esteem. As he stood there glaring at the spheroid beasts, he felt like he had just fallen out of the sky and slammed into the earth.

“You just wait. How dare you consume Bai Xiaochun’s pill furnaces! I’m gonna make you regret it!”

Rage burning, he spun and shot back to the Armory. As for Bai Lin, he saw Bai Xiaochun’s reaction and sighed. Bai Lin knew that it wouldn’t be long before all of the savage tribes in the Wildlands would have those same spheroid beasts, which had obviously been specifically designed to deal with Bai Xiaochun’s pill furnaces!

Before long, Bai Xiaochun was back in the Armory and walking

into his courtyard residence. “How dare you consume my pill furnaces! How dare you destroy my medicinal pills! Challenging me, huh?! Trifling little beasts. With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun will reduce all of you to ashes!

“Zhao Long. Liu Li. All of you stand guard, and don’t let anyone inside. I'm going into secluded meditation!!” Waving his arm, he dragged eight pill furnaces with him into his personal residence, slamming the door shut behind him with a bang. Zhao Long and the others gasped, unsure of what had happened. None of them had ever seen Bai Xiaochun like this.

“What’s going on?” As they exchanged awkward glances, uneasy feelings rose up in their hearts.

Chapter 485: Aphrodisiac Pill To Shock All Creation!

As Bai Xiaochun settled down cross-legged in his residence, he had a fierce expression on his face, and his eyes were so wide that all of the veins were visible, and they seemed like they were on fire. Waving his hand, he produced an earthflame crystal and settled one of the pill furnaces in front of him.

“I can’t believe you made me lose face in front of all those cultivators! Dammit! Bai Xiaochun is afraid of a lot of things in heaven and earth, but he’s not afraid of beasts like you!” Waving his sleeve, he sent a huge pile of medicinal plants flying into the pill furnace.

“I refuse to believe that I can’t mop the floor with those big-bellied beasts. How dare they consume my pill furnaces and destroy my medicinal pills! It’s bad enough they wrecked my battle credit income, but they also had to discredit me! They’re intentionally embarrassing me!” The more he thought about it, the angrier he got, and at the same time, he began to concoct medicine as if he were bedeviled.

It had been a long time since he had sunk into a state like this. His hands almost blurred, and rumbling echoed out from the pill furnace. Soon, the medicinal liquid in the furnace began to form, and a strong medicinal aroma spread out.

Three days passed by in a flash, during which time Bai Xiaochun never stepped out of his residence. Instead, he remained inside, concocting medicine, and occasionally letting out peals of maniacal laughter.

“How dare you provoke me! I’m gonna show you once and for all how awesome Bai Xiaochun is!

“Hmmmmph! This medicinal pill isn’t strong enough yet. Just

wait, you trifling beasts, you just wait!”

When Zhao Long, Liu Li, and the others heard his laughter, they gasped in fear at the strange state that he was in.

By this point, they had heard about what occurred outside the Great Wall a few days before, that the savages had used some strange, spheroid beasts to consume Bai Xiaochun’s pill furnaces. At that point, they understood why he’d come back so angry.

“Is he really that mad just because they figured out how to stop his pill furnaces?”

Another half a day went by. On the evening of the third day, Bai Xiaochun’s door slammed open, and he stepped out, thin, emaciated, and his hair completely disheveled.

“Zhao Long, go tell Bai Lin that I need skythicket leaf, female beast musk, male beast bones, earthdragon root....” In one breath, Bai Xiaochun rattled off several dozen types of medicinal plants. “And I need them today!”

With that, he walked back into his residence and slammed the door.

Zhao Long was starting to get nervous. For some reason, this version of Bai Xiaochun seemed very dangerous. As soon as Bai Xiaochun walked back into his residence, Zhao Long hurried off to find General Bai Lin, and before long, the medicinal plants Bai Xiaochun had requested were delivered.

Zhao Long cautiously knocked on Bai Xiaochun’s door, which opened as Bai Xiaochun reached out to grab the medicinal plants. Through the crack of the opened door, Zhao Long was just able to make out a cloud of swirling pink smoke.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked haggard and thin, with a terrifying, demonic gleam in his eyes.

Another two days passed. For some time now, a huge vortex had filled the sky because of the tampering with the Underworld River,

but for some reason it was now obscured with clouds, clouds that were filled with bolts of crackling lightning. Then, without any warning, large amounts of lightning suddenly began to descend upon the armory.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the Armory's spell formation activated. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's hoarse laughter could be heard filling the air. The combination of all the sights and sounds immediately caused Zhao Long and the other guards to looked around in alarm.

“What’s going on!?!?”

“W-what’s happening!?” Simultaneously, wisps of smoke were beginning to seep out from the cracks and crevices in the corners of Bai Xiaochun's residence building. In the blink of an eye, they filled the area, and from the way they were moving, they almost seemed intelligent, like a whole group of tiny snakes.

Zhao Long and the rest of the guards began to edge away in fear. If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal, and yet, as soon as the smoke appeared in the Armory, vast quantities of ants suddenly rushed out into the open and began fleeing in the opposite direction.

Ants weren't a very common sight in Great Wall City, but at the moment, they carpeted the ground. Before any of the guards could react, the entire Armory was thrown into a commotion.

“W-what’s causing this!?!?”

“Heavens! There's thunder and smoke and ants! Something big is going on, but what?!”

Considering what was happening in the Armory, other cultivators in the five legions were devolving into a commotion. Furthermore, the savages outside of the Great Wall could see the strange lightning, and were wondering what terrifying item had appeared inside of Great Wall City.

As everyone reeled in shock, and as the heavens rumbled with thunder, a lightning bolt that seemed to be composed of countless other lightning bolts put together slammed down onto the Armory, piercing through its spell formation shield and landing onto Bai Xiaochun's residence.

The ground quaked, and the entire residence shook as much of it was destroyed. Zhao Long and the other guards backed up in terror, gasping the entire time.

"What kind of medicine is Grandmaster Bai concocting?!" Meanwhile, what could only be described as crazed laughter rang out from the wreckage of Bai Xiaochun's residence.

"Still not good enough! Zhao Long, go get me three thousand portions of the same set of ingredients I had you get last time!!"

A tremor ran through Zhao Long as he looked at the mostly-destroyed residence, and the increasingly thick smoke emanating from it. It caused a sensation of intense danger to fill his heart. Swallowing hard, he looked over at the other guards, and could see how ashen their faces were. Thoroughly bewildered by what was happening, he gritted his teeth and hurried off.

When he returned, Bai Lin was with him.

When Bai Lin saw the wreckage, and the terrifying pink smoke, he looked up at the thunderclouds in the sky, and called out, "Xiaochun, there's no need to be impulsive about the--"

"Leave me alone! They're just a few beasts, right? I have tens of thousands of ways of dealing with stupid-ass beasts like that! Just wait and see!" A long moment passed, and then Bai Xiaochun spoke again. "Zhao Long, throw those medicinal plants over here!"

Zhao Long didn't dare to refuse. After glancing at Bai Lin and getting confirmation, he tossed a bag of holding into the pink smoke.

A bit of time passed in which Bai Lin considered trying to do

more to convince Bai Xiaochun to stop. However, that was when rumbling sounds could be heard inside the smoke, which suddenly transformed from pink to red. At the same time, more bolts of lightning began to fall from above. Shockingly, even as the first round of lightning fell, more lightning could be seen converging higher up.

In the blink of an eye, fully 10,000 lightning bolts merged together into something like a net that covered the entire sky. Even Bai Lin gasped at the sight of it, let alone the other ordinary cultivators in Great Wall City.

Even the charging Wildlands army suddenly stopped in place to look at what was happening. As for the beasts in the army, they were suddenly stricken by very uneasy feelings. Some of them even began to pant, and look over toward Great Wall City with red, glowing eyes, as if they were being stimulated into madness.

Bai Lin was suddenly stricken by a very ominous feeling when he saw the smoke turn red. There was something terrifying about it, something that didn't have anything to do with one's cultivation base, but rather, with some other, deeper instinct. "Xiaochun, don't... don't get too worked up. I'm working on a way to deal with those spheroid beasts. You just--"

"Don't even try to convince me!" came the growling interruption. "I, Bai Xiaochun, will definitely show those beasts that Lord Bai's pill furnaces are not that delicious after all!" Inside the residence, Bai Xiaochun was sitting right in front of eight crimson-hot pill furnaces, his hair disheveled, his face gaunt, surrounded by large quantities of medicine bottles. He had gone crazy in his pill concocting, relying completely on spirit alcohol to sustain his cultivation base, as well as numerous special medicinal pills.

By this point, it was correct to say that Bai Xiaochun had gone all out!

With a shout, he slapped his hands onto the surface of each of the violently shaking pill furnaces.

Cracks spread out across their surfaces, whereupon intense gravitational forces sprang up. At the same time, the red smoke stirred, instantly rushing into the eight pill furnaces!

As soon as the smoke vanished, Bai Xiaochun appeared in front of Bai Lin and the others. A bright gleam flickered in his eyes as he threw his head back and laughed at the top of his lungs.

“Trifling big-bellied beasts! I, Bai Xiaochun, have prepared a wonderful gift for you. Let’s see if you ever dare to consume my things again!!

“I used several thousand sets of supreme-grade ingredients, and even cleansed the impurities with tens of thousands of bolts of lightning. Then I purified the medicine again with a secret magic, and then went so far as to ruin the pill furnaces to refine them a third time! The result is something paramount, something unparalleled in heaven and earth, something that affects both male and female beasts. A single whiff of it will drive them crazy to the point of insanity! It is an Aphrodisiac Pill to shock all creation!”

Chapter 486: Worldwide Death Warrant For Bai Xiaochun!

Zhao Long's eyes went wide, and Liu Li gaped in shock. Everyone else had similar expressions on their faces as they looked at Bai Xiaochun standing there, laughing crazily.

“Aphrodisiac Pill?” Bai Lin said, mouth agape.

Before anyone could ask any more questions, Bai Xiaochun waved his sleeve, sweeping up all eight pill furnaces as he used the power of his Undying Tendons in his legs to leap into the air toward the Great Wall.

“Alright, big-bellied beasts,” he said, his eyes shining brightly as he sailed through the air, “Bai Xiaochun is coming for you!”

As for Bai Lin, his eyes flickered as he suppressed his confusion and took a step to follow Bai Xiaochun. As for Zhao Long and the others, after a moment of hesitation, they also flew into motion toward the Great Wall, filled with curiosity about the medicinal pills Bai Xiaochun had created in such a terrifying state.

It didn't take long for Bai Xiaochun to be atop the Great Wall itself, where he let out a shout and threw all of the pill furnaces out toward the battlefield.

Down below, the giants of the savage tribes, as well as the seemingly endless sea of souls, were in the middle of a charge toward the wall. Now that the pill furnaces' power had been negated, the vengeful souls were under less pressure, and were easier to control. As a result, the necromancers had power to spare, which they used to upgrade some of the vengeful souls, making them much more powerful than before.

More booms rang out on the battlefield than ever before. The increased power of the vengeful souls ensured that less savages were falling in battle, and at the same time, the pressure on the

five legions had increased.

As for the eight pill furnaces that had just been tossed out, they were crimson from heat, and were a shocking sight to behold. The mere thought of what would happen if they exploded was terrifying to contemplate.

In fact, as soon as they appeared, the savage giants felt anxiety rising up in their hearts. However, they didn't panic. As they stared at the incoming furnaces, the black-robed old man on the black altar some distance away, as well as the necromancers and tribal chiefs by his side, were all watching the scene play out on a screen of water.

"Scraping the bottom of the barrel, huh?" the black-robed old man said coolly. "That move won't work anymore!"

Expression cold, he performed a right-handed incantation gesture and then waved his finger at the water screen. The screen rippled, after which a dozen or so spheroid beasts on the battlefield suddenly raised their heads and bellowed.

Then, looks of disdain appeared on their faces as they opened their mouths wide and inhaled deeply!

Instantly, the eight pill furnaces wobbled back and forth, and then shot toward the spheroid beasts, who began to fight amongst each other to consume them. Within moments, all of the pill furnaces had been swallowed down.

As for the beasts who hadn't managed to swallow any furnaces, they began to howl in discontent.

When the old man on the black altar saw the scene playing out, he smiled faintly, a look of scorn in his eyes.

This was the second time that the cultivators of the five legions had witnessed pill furnaces being consumed. Bai Lin stood there quietly, while the other cultivators let out light sighs.

Bai Xiaochun was the only one who simply stood there, looking

coldly at the eight beasts who had swallowed the pill furnaces.

“Eat up,” he murmured, “and don’t spill a drop!”

A muffled thump rang out, and the huge beasts’ bellies expanded for a moment before shrinking back down to normal.

The beasts then looked threateningly toward the Great Wall and let out menacing howls before turning, as if to leave. Simultaneously, a large number of savage giants flew over to protect them. Meanwhile, the other savage giants on the battlefield began to call out in taunting fashion.

“That’s all you’ve got? Those magical items are useless against us now!”

“Those wimps on the Great Wall are still trying this gimmick? Eight pill furnaces aren’t even enough to get our beasts full!”

“How moronic can you get? Their pill furnace trick didn’t work last time, and yet they tried the same thing again!”

When the cultivators of the five legions heard the laughter ringing out from the battlefield, they gritted their teeth in frustration. Were it not for orders passed down by the deva to hold their position on the wall, they would definitely have poured out in deadly fashion and filled the battlefield with rivers of Wildlander blood.

Bai Lin sighed, and turned to Bai Xiaochun as if to say something.

Before he could, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes narrowed, and he murmured, “Any moment now, and their laughter will cease. When I get pissed off, I frighten even myself.”

When Bai Lin heard that, he was taken aback. And then, before he could ask any questions, the eight beasts who had consumed the pill furnaces suddenly stopped moving.

A moment later, their expressions flickered, and slowly, their eyes began to turn bright red. They began shivering, and even

opened their mouths to burp out pink smoke. In fact, their entire bodies suddenly seemed to be glowing red.

Hoarse pants could be heard, which soon turned into clamoring howls. As the surrounding savage giants looked on in shock, the eight beasts suddenly turned on them and pounced in full madness.

Two of the beasts even turned on their own kind with maddened howls. It took only a moment before all eight of the beasts were pouncing on anything nearby that moved....

All of them were under the complete control of the Aphrodisiac Pill!

Furthermore, because the Aphrodisiac Pills had exploded inside of the beasts, the energy released was impossible to dispel. It was difficult to put into words the incredible power contained in pills like that, pills which had been refined four times!

Whether the beasts were male or female didn't matter. As long as the pill furnaces had exploded in their stomachs, they were bereft of all sense of reason, and became lost within the effects of the Aphrodisiac Pill. If that were all there were to the situation, it might not have been a big deal. However, they continuously belched out pink smoke, smoke that didn't affect the vengeful souls, but most definitely affected the savage giants!

All the giants had to do was get a whiff of that smoke, and their faces would instantly flush. A moment later, their eyes would turn both blank and bloodshot at the same time, and they would throw their heads back and roar.

In the briefest of moments, the entire battlefield was thrown into complete and utter chaos....

Screams and shrieks rang out in all directions. As of this moment, the area outside the Great Wall didn't look like a battlefield at all, but rather, a scene of absolute pandemonium....

One of the main reasons why these Aphrodisiac Pills were so terrifyingly effective was that Bai Xiaochun had combined his original formula with his Fantasy Pill formula. He had even performed spirit enhancements on some of the main ingredients. Thus, the pills were far more shocking than they had ever been before.

The cultivators on the Great Wall looked down, their minds spinning, looks of blank shock on their faces, their hearts battered by waves of astonishment because of what they were witnessing.

“Th-this... this....”

“They... dammit! What exactly is going on?!”

“What medicinal pills were they? Heavens!!”

Everyone from the five legions was talking about what was happening, whether they were ordinary soldiers, lieutenants, captains, and even the colonels and major generals. Without exception, the shocking scene playing out caused them all to lose their cool.

Even Bai Lin, a general of the five legions, felt his mind spinning in astonishment.

In fact, the indescribable scene playing out was so shocking that the huge eye on top of the pagoda flickered. Then, three-eyed Chen Hetian appeared. He was a respected deva, and yet even he couldn't help but gasp, and then look over at Bai Xiaochun with a very strange expression on his face.

“Is this really the Great Wall?” he thought.

In fact, everyone was similarly stunned. As of this moment, the name of the pill's creator, Bai Xiaochun, was being indelibly branded into the minds of everyone present. “For the rest of my life, I must make sure to never, ever provoke the terrifying Bai Xiaochun!”

As countless gasps rang out, and the chaos on the battlefield

continued to play out, the black-robed old man on the black altar, as well as the surrounding necromancers and tribal chiefs, were all watching what was happening.

Deathly silence prevailed on the altar, as all eyes were completely glued to the water screen. No one was talking, and in fact, none of them were even breathing. It took a long moment before any breathing to occur, but when it did, it soon turned into panting, and eventually the entire group was physically shaking.

Then, cries of rage began to ring out from the altar.

“Bai Xiaochun!!!”

“The Wildlands will destroy you or die in the attempt!!”

“Heaven-damned Bai Xiaochun! Y-y-you... you will not die a good death!!!”

“Issue a death warrant! Tell the whole world that this Bai Xiaochun must die!! If he doesn’t die, the Wildlands will live in disgrace for all time!!”

Chapter 487: Major Progress With The Soul Convergence Pill!

Bai Xiaochun looked out at the chaos on the battlefield and cleared his throat. Then he stuck his chin up and flicked his sleeve.

“With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun gave all savages and beasts no other choice than to be reduced to ashes!” Looking like the picture of a lonely hero, he turned and strolled dramatically off the Great Wall. As he did, the cultivators behind him watched him leave, shock and other mixed emotions clearly visible on their faces.

Some of those expressions were those of reverence, some were fear, and others were plain terror....

As Bai Xiaochun left, the magical cannons on the Great Wall rumbled to life. How could the five legions not take advantage of this spectacular opportunity? Some of the cultivators even charged onto the battlefield itself, where every enemy in their path was crushed like twigs. Bai Xiaochun didn't need to know the final outcome of the battle. He was content knowing that his message had been clearly sent to the Wildlands: provoke Bai Xiaochun, and pay the price!

The Aphrodisiac Pill was not without fault. For example, although it worked quite well on beasts, if the savage giants wished to protect themselves from its effects, they could do so in many ways. The only reason it had worked so effectively in this situation was because of the element of surprise. And of course, Bai Xiaochun was well aware of that.

However, he didn't plan to use the Aphrodisiac Pill as a way to accumulate battle credit. He simply wanted to use it to frighten the Wildlands, and ensure that they didn't dare to send beasts to consume his exploding furnaces.

“Hmph! Well, exploding furnaces can't be a long-term tactic anyway. I need to switch things up a bit, and the key to that is my Soul Convergence Pill.” As Bai Xiaochun left, Zhao Long and the others followed him, their hearts trembling, the mere sight of Bai Xiaochun's back causing their hair to stand on end.

When it came to thoughts of Bai Xiaochun's terrifying Aphrodisiac Pill, both Zhao Long and Liu Li felt the same. Not only were they scared to death, but they also couldn't help but muse that he was truly born for battle....

In the following few days, word spread to all of the cultivators in Great Wall City. Stories abounded about what had occurred when Bai Xiaochun made his move, and yet again, his name shook the entire city.

Not only were his pill concocting techniques fear-inspiring, but his medicinal pills were horrific. Most of the grandmasters who lived near him in the Armory were so scared that they moved away....

By that point, the Armory was almost half empty, and when Bai Xiaochun realized that, he simply waved his sleeve and had the empty half consolidated into his own personal headquarters.

Of course, because of his actions, he earned a huge amount of battle credit, which immediately got him promoted from lieutenant to captain.

Because of that, despite his residence being much larger than before, the increased number of subordinates under his control ensured that it didn't feel empty at all.

Not only was Bai Xiaochun famous within Great Wall City, but he was now well-known beyond the wall as well.

Of the hundreds of tribes that occupied the eastern Wildlands, all had heard of Bai Xiaochun and his horrifying Aphrodisiac Pill, as well as the tragic defeat the Wildlands had suffered because of

them. For those reasons, Bai Xiaochun's name rose high on the Wildlands Execution List. Before, he had been in the top 100, but now, he was in 27th place!

Of the people higher than him on the list, the weakest were Nascent Soul cultivators. In fact, many of the people below him on the list were in that same cultivation level. Bai Xiaochun was the only Core Formation cultivator in the top 50.

He was now famous, had a huge accumulation of battle credit, and had earned the rank of captain. Everywhere he went in Great Wall City, the cultivators who saw him would salute with clasped hands.

It was a wonderful feeling that Bai Xiaochun loved, and he couldn't help but muse that staying here had been a good decision. In fact, he would often take out his copper mirror and ask all sorts of questions that drove imposter Nightcrypt crazy.

Imposter Nightcrypt would wrack his brains with new ways to flatter Bai Xiaochun, until Bai Xiaochun would eventually start to get embarrassed and stop asking questions.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's cultivation by no means stagnated. With all his battle credit, he was able to get plenty of medicinal pills to help with his Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. At the same time, he continued to work on his Soul Convergence Pill.

Although his cultivation speed was actually moving along quite rapidly, whenever he thought about how much it cost to get the Nascent Soul Pill that would propel him into the great circle of the Gold Core stage, he would always worry that he was going too slow.

However, despite his cultivation base rising at a relatively slow rate, his Undying Live Forever Technique was making huge progress. After all, Bai Lin had been utterly shocked by Bai Xiaochun's skill in the Dao of medicine, and was more than happy to provide him with anything he asked for.

He didn't even mind that some of the medicinal plants being requested were actually for personal use. As far as he was concerned, Bai Xiaochun was just too important.

With so many medicinal plants at his disposal, Bai Xiaochun's speed with the Undying Live Forever Technique picked up. By this point, he had Undying Tendons spreading throughout his left arm. One night, his left arm even began to glow with bright light, and turned translucent to the point of being able to see his blood and veins inside.

Eyes widening, he clenched his hand into a fist, which caused cracking sounds to emanate out. Then he punched out into the air, and his hand moved so quickly it was almost invisible.

The sensation of incredible power which spread out from his body gave him a very clear idea of how much fleshly body strength he had at his disposal.

"Success! I have Undying Tendons in both legs as well as my left arm. Now I just need to finish my head, right arm, and torso!

"When that happens, I'll have completed my work with the Undying Tendons, and as such, the third volume of the Undying Codex. Then, all I'll have to do is break through from Gold Core to Nascent Soul!

"Once I'm in the Nascent Soul stage, I can finally cultivate Undying Bones!" The mere thought of Undying Bones caused Bai Xiaochun to purse his lips in excitement.

According to the descriptions in the Undying Codex, once he cultivated the Undying Bones, he would essentially have reached the point of having an indestructible fleshly body.

"Skin, flesh, tendons, bones, blood!" he said softly.

"Undying Skin is for defensive purposes. Undying Flesh gives power. Undying Tendons helps with speed. Undying Bones provides the unifying factor for all three, allowing one to unleash

incredible force!” Having considered all these matters, his anticipation regarding the Undying Bones grew even greater.

“Even without Undying Bones, and only being half-finished with my Undying Tendons, my fleshly body power combined with my Gold Core cultivation base puts me in an incredible position with my cultivation level.” A flicker of pride appeared in his eyes as he thought back to his fight with the statue of Gongsun Wan’er. Back then, although he had a Heaven-Dao Gold Core, he was still only in the mid Core Formation stage.

During the fight, he had been unable to truly unleash what he was capable of. After all, even an ocean of water that has to pass through a tiny bottleneck, will be limited.

Things were different now, though. As he inched closer to the great circle, and had half a body’s worth of Undying Tendons, he was completely confident that if he had to fight that Gongsun Wan’er statue again, he would be able to secure victory as easy as flipping over his hand!

“Elder Brother Zhao Tianjiao could kill Nascent Soul experts when in Core Formation.... I should be able to as well.” Bai Xiaochun could tell that if he truly unleashed the full power of his cultivation base, the terrifying level of power would be no weaker than what Zhao Tianjiao was capable of.

“From now on, not a single person beneath late Core Formation will be a match for me!” Flicking his sleeve, he laughed loudly.

Sometimes, good things come in waves. It was only three days after the Undying Tendons in his left arm were finished that, after nearly half a year of endless experimentation, he produced a batch of Soul Convergence Pills that were exactly what he had been looking for!

These Soul Convergence Pills were no longer black, but rather, gold!

They emanated an invisible aura that distorted the air around them, and in addition to that, a black hole could be seen spinning inside of them.

Furthermore, if you looked at one of the pills for too long, you would almost feel like your soul was going to be tugged out of you.

The moment the golden Soul Convergence Pills appeared, he knew that they were high-grade pills. Although they still had some impurities, those impurities wouldn't cause too many problems.

These were the most perfect Soul Convergence Pills he had concocted so far.

Excited, he sent a message to Bai Lin, and then took Zhao Long and his other guards up to the Great Wall.

Bai Lin was there to meet him, and immediately noticed the golden medicinal pill he was holding.

“Soul Convergence Pill?” he asked, looking excited.

“Exactly!” Bai Xiaochun replied, a proud smile on his face as he held the pill in his hand and looked out beyond the wall, his eyes glittering.

Chapter 488: The Might Of The Pill!

The battle outside the Great Wall had been going on for the better part of a year. However, because of the chaos which had played out recently, the Wildlanders had been driven into a fury. At the same time, the savage tribes didn't dare to show their faces.

Few savage giants could be seen on the battlefield, and those that were visible kept their distance from the wall. There were few beasts either. However, the tide of vengeful souls continued to smash into the wall and the shield. Although this form of attack wasn't particularly effective, the sheer numbers involved ensured that the shield continue to ripple and emit light.

Clearly, the vengeful souls had no hope of breaking through the defenses of the Great Wall. The magical cannons were firing constantly, and the cultivators of the five legions attacked with surgical precision. As a result, most of the souls which got close were destroyed.

A battle like this had not taken place from the moment the Great Wall came into existence until this moment. By this point, it was impossible to determine exactly how many vengeful souls had been destroyed. And yet, there were always more souls to replace them.

Furthermore, because the Underworld River had been tampered with, the number of souls only seemed to increase.

It was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and strode out to the edge of the wall, his eyes shining with anticipation. When he threw out the golden Soul Convergence Pill, it turned into a streak of golden light that flew out into the very middle of the soul tide.

When it thumped onto the ground, it didn't break apart like the previous version of the pill had. Instead, it emitted gold, rippling light in all directions.

Instantly, both the cultivators on the wall and the Wildlands savages could see that the golden ripples extended to fill a 3,000-meter area!

Within that 3,000-meter area, all of the vengeful souls trembled, and before they could do anything, a whooshing sound filled the air as all of the souls were sucked together into one spot.

The Soul Convergence Pill became like a black hole, and in the blink of an eye, countless screams could be heard as all of the more than 10,000 souls in the area of the pill became streaks of light that were absorbed into the pill itself.

However, that wasn't anything very impressive, and Bai Lin even frowned in response. The power of this Soul Convergence Pill didn't seem to measure up to the exploding pill furnaces.

However, before he could put too much thought into the matter, the golden Soul Convergence Pill which had sucked in all the souls in the 3,000-meter area suddenly change color. In the briefest of moments, it turned bright red!

In that instant, an incredible rumbling sound echoed out as the second deadly effect of the Soul Convergence Pill was unleashed. The pill exploded in wild fashion, sending red ripples out to cover a 30,000-meter area!!

As that happened, the vengeful souls that were covered by the red ripples began to shake violently, as if they were struggling against something. Then, the brutality in their eyes vanished, and their bodies vanished as quickly as a strand of smoke in a storm wind! Furthermore, in the moment of vanishing, their eyes suddenly seemed to be looking around and seeing everything clearly!

Within that clarity, there seemed to be a look of relief....

The battlefield once again went silent. The savage giants began to tremble as they looked over at the terrifying medicinal pill that

was clearly as powerful as ten exploding furnaces. Without even thinking about it, they began to edge away.

Back on the Great Wall, everyone, Bai Lin included, gasped in the realization that this new pill was clearly as effective as ten or more exploding furnaces.

And that was just one medicinal pill!!

Bai Lin looked over excitedly at Bai Xiaochun and asked, “Grandmaster Bai, are you the only one who can use this pill, or can it be used by others, too?!”

“When Bai Xiaochun concocts pills, of course they’re the type that anyone can use!” Even Bai Xiaochun had been a bit shocked by what had happened outside the wall. That was especially the case because of how the vengeful souls had looked relieved right before vanishing. That left Bai Xiaochun feeling very strange.

Even he had been unaware that there would be another incredible use to the pills. Apparently, they could purify the souls they affected.

Meanwhile, something else happened that no one else noticed. A blurry figure had appeared high up the sky, who was now looking down at the ground below. It was an old man, and although it was difficult to make out his facial features, if Bai Xiaochun had been close by, he would have recognized him immediately. He was none other than the gravekeeper!!

Surrounding him were what appeared to be illusory, rippling fluid, which was none other than Underworld River water.

He looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun, then turned away and vanished into the Underworld River water.

Down on the Great Wall, Bai Lin’s eyes shone as brightly as the sun.

“Wonderful. Can you mass-produce them?”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then looked out at the battlefield and waved his hand dismissively. “Of course I can. However, as you can probably tell, I don’t have enough medicinal plants or pill furnaces.”

Delighted, Bai Lin threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“That’s no problem at all. Would a thousand pill furnaces be enough?! As for the medicinal plants, I can take you to see the liaison from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. As long as your demands aren’t too excessive, he should be able to accommodate you.”

Bai Xiaochun realized that Bai Lin was reminding him not to get too greedy. Chuckling, he replied, “Of course....” while simultaneously trying to decide what medicinal plants he would ask for.

Bai Lin took a deep breath to keep his excitement under control as he thought about what it would be like for all the soldiers in the Skin Flayers to have a Soul Convergence Pill ready to throw out at any time. It could completely change the entire course of the war!

In fact, he could even see himself as being the first general from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to actually lead a devastating campaign into the Wildlands!

The meritorious services he would perform, and the glory he would accumulate, would be talked about throughout the ages. Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Lin couldn’t prevent his heart from racing as he looked from the battlefield back to Bai Xiaochun.

“Xiaochun, according to the deva patriarch, this Wildlands offensive is different from anything in the past. Although it might seem like they’re on the run right now, the truth is that within the next few months, they will lead a charge greater than anything so far!

“During that battle, it is highly likely that one of their almighty Deva Realm experts will join the fight. Of course, Senior Chen will handle that part of the fighting, and we wouldn't be able to do much to help. But in terms of the rest of the battle, it will be huge, and we will see an unimaginable number of savages and souls.

“Therefore, not only must you hurry and concoct as many Soul Convergence Pill as possible, you should also try to come up with a way to produce a type of exploding furnace whose detonation surpasses anything you did before by multiple times. The bigger the explosion, the better!!”

In response to Bai Lin's words, Bai Xiaochun stood there thoughtfully. The truth was that he didn't particularly want to concoct medicinal pills with the express purpose of getting the furnace to explode. After all, he was an apothecary, and apothecaries were supposed to concoct medicine, not explode furnaces. His exploding furnaces had only resulted from an unexpected turn of events during the concocting process.

Back when he had first arrived in Great Wall City, he would have been too nervous to refuse, but right now, he felt a bit daring, and also determined. He was a grandmaster, right?! Therefore, he glared back at Bai Lin and shook his head.

“General Bai, I'm afraid you can just forget about--” However, before he could finish speaking, Bai Lin's expression flickered, and at the same time, both of them heard numerous cries of alarm rising up.

Some distance away from the Great Wall, more than a hundred beams of light could be seen screaming through the air at incredible speed, clearly ignoring any threat to themselves. As they closed in, it was possible to see that there were over a hundred giants, each one of them at least 60 meters tall. From their size, and from the incredible fluctuations rolling off of them, it was obvious that these were powerful experts from whatever tribe they came from.

The cultivators on the wall instantly focused on the incoming giants. Soon, the giants began to self-detonate, causing incredible booms to ring out. However, even as that drew the attention of more cultivators on the wall, three beams of light appeared from a different direction, like three arrows ripping through the air, borrowing the force of the self-detonating giants to reach the Great Wall itself.

Soon, it was clear that within these three beams of light were not giants, but rather, soul cultivators!!

There were two men and one woman, and as soon as they appeared, they unleashed a bizarre divine ability that caused a demonic green light to form together into a huge hand. In response, Bai Lin's eyes glittered, and he waved his right hand, sending out a powerful surge of energy toward the three soul cultivators. In that same moment, Bai Xiaochun looked over.

He was separated from the three soul cultivators by the shield, and yet, they were staring directly at him with venomous hatred. Before Bai Lin's divine ability could get close to them, all three self-detonated!

There had to be a good reason for two waves of attackers to all self-detonate!!

Heart pounding, Bai Xiaochun slowly began to back up.

Chapter 489: Assassination Attempt!

A huge boom echoed out as the soul cultivators' self-detonation sent a huge shockwave rolling out in all directions. At the same time, an illusory figure appeared within the explosion. It was a gray specter riding a black soul horse, and it was moving with speed that far outmatched that of the soul cultivators from moments before. In the blink of an eye, it pierced through the shield and was bearing down on Bai Xiaochun!

“Quasi-Deva Realm necromancer soul!!” Everything happened so quickly that everyone was rooted in place in shock, with the exception of Bai Lin, who immediately leapt to intercept the enemy. However, the incoming necromancer soul was already resigned to being destroyed, and was holding nothing back in his attack. Stretching his right hand out, he pointed his finger at Bai Xiaochun, sending a green stream of energy out toward him. Even Bai Lin attacking with all the power he could muster only slowed down the green energy, and it was still moving so quickly that no Core Formation cultivator would be able to evade it.

Bai Xiaochun's face drained of blood as a sensation of deadly crisis filled him. In that dangerous moment, he roared at the top of his lungs and drew upon the power of the Undying Tendons in both of his legs to fly backward with speed that surpassed the Core Formation level. After putting some distance between himself and the stream of green energy, he drew upon his frigid qi to teleport 300 meters away. Only by doing all of these things was he just barely able to extricate himself from the danger!

The spot he had once occupied was pierced through by the green energy. Sadly, all of the Skin Flayers within several hundred meters of that spot who were hit by the fluctuations of the energy were instantly transformed into pools of blood....

None of them even had a chance to scream before they were killed. With the exception of Bai Lin and Bai Xiaochun, everyone

was killed instantly. As for the Skin Flayers beyond that radius, their faces went ashen in terror.

Bai Xiaochun coughed up a mouthful of blood. His bones were all on the verge of being crushed, and even his five yin organs and six yang organs were almost destroyed. And that was just from the fluctuations rolling off of the attack itself!

Looking around at the pools of blood that were all that remained of the nearby cultivators, Bai Xiaochun's heart trembled.

"You--" Before he could say anything else, he coughed up another mouthful of blood. Thankfully, he had a powerful fleshly body and a Gold Core cultivation base. Because of that, he had avoided death. And yet, he still ended up being seriously injured.

Spitting more blood out of his mouth, he looked over at the illusory necromancer, who was just now being wiped out by the gaze of the enormous eye on the tower.

Even as the illusory necromancer was destroyed, a look of deep confusion could be seen in his eyes that said, How did he survive? How did he escape death!?!

Originally, the necromancer had assumed that even if Bai Xiaochun managed to avoid the initial attack, being nothing more than a Core Formation cultivator, he would definitely be killed by the resulting fluctuations.

After all, that necromancer had a quasi-Deva Realm cultivation base, and plus, there had been absolutely no indication that there would be an assassination attempt. In order to guarantee success, the Wildlands had sacrificed more than a hundred savage giants as a distraction, as well as three soul cultivators. In addition to all of that, the assassin was actually the soul of a powerful necromancer. All of that had been done just to try to kill Bai Xiaochun!

The mere sight of Bai Xiaochun caused all Wildlanders to seethe with hatred, and yet, they had met with nothing but defeat in their

effort!

Sweat was currently pouring down Bai Xiaochun's forehead. The sensation of imminent death moments ago had been incredibly intense. The three soul cultivators had been extremely powerful, with Nascent Soul cultivation bases. As for the necromancer, he was on the same level as Bai Lin, half a step into the Deva Realm. Because he existed as a soul body, and also had some special techniques on his side, he had been able to get through the shield to deliver a single attack.

If Bai Lin hadn't been there, Bai Xiaochun wouldn't have been able to evade the attack even if he was capable of greater speed than before!

Bai Lin had a very unsightly expression on his face. Bai Xiaochun had almost been killed right next to him, which was in and of itself a bald-faced provocation. Bai Xiaochun was extremely important to him; perhaps if he had already concocted a large number of Soul Convergence Pills, his loss could be accepted. But at the moment, he hadn't even started working. For him to die now would have been a huge blow to the cultivators of Great Wall City.

In his anxiety, he rushed over to Bai Xiaochun and handed him a medicinal pill that glowed with violet light.

“Take this Godly Vestige Pill!”

With a single whiff of the pill's medicinal aroma, Bai Xiaochun was able to identify it as a holy pill that was designed to heal injuries. Without hesitation, he popped it into his mouth, and an instant later, his entire body thrummed with spiritual power and life force. At the same time, all of his wounds and injuries began to fade away.

It was a miraculous pill the likes of which Bai Xiaochun had never seen before, but he could tell that it was something incredibly valuable. In fact, Bai Lin probably kept it on hand as a life-saving contingency plan for himself. However, at the moment,

Bai Xiaochun wasn't interested in getting more information about that. Turning to Bai Lin, he said, "General Bai, when you invited me to the top of the Great Wall to observe the fighting, you said over and over again that it would be safe!"

Bai Xiaochun was still feeling a bit jumpy and frightened, so as soon as he finished speaking, he backed a bit further away from the edge of the wall.

Bai Lin felt horrible. Clasp hands apologetically to Bai Xiaochun, he then glared out at the battlefield with killing intent flickering in his eyes.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun wasn't angry at Bai Lin. Were it not for Bai Lin stepping in to help, Bai Xiaochun might not even be alive at the moment. "Can necromancers really just go right through the Great Wall's shield?" he asked.

Although Bai Xiaochun's question had been worded rather vaguely, the point was obvious: he had almost just died. He usually maintained vigilance wherever he went, but because of the spell formation shield protecting the Great Wall, had always assumed that he was safe.

After a moment of silence, Bai Lin replied, "Most people can't. In fact, necromancers with physical bodies can't either. Only in soul form can they do such a thing. However, after passing through the shield, the eye on the tower will detect them, and they will be killed within three breaths of time. Therefore, very few necromancers would choose to do such a thing."

Forcing his breathing under control, Bai Xiaochun glared out at the battlefield beyond the wall. At the moment, the savages were retreating, as was the tide of souls.

"Xiaochun, please forgive my carelessness today," Bai Lin said, turning back to look at Bai Xiaochun. "Why don't you come with me to see the sect liaison? All you have to do is say the word to him, and any resources you need will be yours."

Bai Xiaochun immediately understood Bai Lin's implication. Bai Lin was giving him an opportunity to stuff his pockets as a way of making up for what had happened. Therefore, he suppressed his anxiety over the events which had just occurred, cast a final hateful glare at the savages, and then followed Bai Lin away.

Soon, they were back in the city, and heading to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect liaison office. Considering his status, Bai Lin didn't need to act polite. Striding up to the entrance, he barked, "Song Yiduo, get out here right now!"

Moments later, a fat, middle-aged man hurried out, huffing and puffing. Clasp ing his hands in greeting, he said, "What do you need? Just say the word."

Bai Lin looked over at Bai Xiaochun and nodded, then stood there looking thoughtfully up into the sky.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun felt that the best way to deal with his anxiety was to crush it with cultivation resources. Therefore, he didn't hesitate to say, "I need 5,000 earthspirit tubers, and each one needs to be at least 500 years old!"

Song Yiduo shivered like a wild boar whose tail had just been stepped on. Yelping, and fat jiggling, he replied, "500 years old? 5,000 of them? That's impossible!"

Ignoring him, Bai Xiaochun continued, "I also need skydragon plums, seven seas ginsengs, wyvern scales, and godglory herbs. 10,000 each!"

Song Yiduo was about to respond when Bai Xiaochun cut in and added, "Plus, fuel for nine-colored flame. A hundred portions!"

Song Yiduo's anger flared. "Impossible! I don't have those things on hand! Who could?!"

Completely ignoring Song Yiduo, Bai Xiaochun continued, "Also, I need 10,000 bottles of spirit alcohol designed to replenish the cultivation base!

“And a hundred Nascent Soul Pills!

“Oh right. That -- what’s it called? -- Godly Vestige Pill! I want a hundred of them too!”

By this point, even Bai Lin was getting a bit nervous. From what he could tell, it would probably require sending a message to his grandfather to acquire such a collection.

As for Song Yiduo, he was wailing inwardly with grief. He was in charge of all the day-to-day affairs in Great Wall City, and if expenditures got too high, he would be punished. Conversely, if he didn’t spend enough to keep the five legions happy, they would get angry.

Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively and looked over at Bai Lin. After a moment of thought, Bai Lin gave Song Yiduo a wry smile and then dragged him off to the side. First, he started out whispering, but then got angry, and finally, smashed his fist into a nearby ornamental rock, scaring the daylights out of Song Yiduo. Then the two of them walked back to Bai Xiaochun.

With a wry smile, Bai Lin hustled Bai Xiaochun away, worried that he would start making more demands. “He couldn’t get you the nine-colored flame fuel or the Godly Vestige Pills even if you killed him. Everything else, he can handle. As for the Nascent Soul Pill, I need to think about how to pull that off....”

Chapter 490: It Could Be!

Bai Xiaochun had been mentally reviewing all of the wonderful things he knew about to try to figure out more things to request, but before he could, he found himself being dragged away by Bai Lin.

Even still, Bai Xiaochun was chuckling inwardly. He had demanded an exorbitant compensation moments ago, and would have been happy if only part of his requests had been fulfilled.

Feeling very pleased with himself, he looked over at Bai Lin, the deadly crisis he had just endured still fresh in mind.

“General, didn’t you just ask me if there was a way to make the pill furnace explosions even more powerful...?”

“What?” Bai Lin replied, his pupils constricted. “Didn’t you say that was impossible?”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes widened into a glare. “Impossible? What do you mean impossible? Of course it’s possible. Or at least, it could be!” Gritting his teeth, he continued, “All you want is a bigger explosion, right? It’s simple. Some time back, I actually caused a pill furnace explosion so big it almost leveled an immortal mountain! All the plants and vegetation were incinerated, and everything else was burned to a crisp!”

As soon as Bai Lin heard this, his eyes began to shine brightly. He was completely obsessed with the exploding pill furnaces, and as such, he quickly asked, “What do you need? Just say the word!”

“The specific medicinal pill formula is one aspect. But more important is the actual furnace involved. I need the same type of pill furnace they had back in the Blood Stream Sect. I’m not really sure how to explain it. Why don’t you have the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect send some people to the River-Defying Sect, and look for the grand elder of Lesser Marsh Peak in the Blood Stream

Division? He can explain the details. Just have the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect make some similar pill furnaces based on his specifications!

“Pill furnaces like that are especially strong, so the explosions they make are incredibly large!

“Just don't forget that I'm from the River-Defying Sect, General Bai, so please make sure the representatives from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect are a bit more polite than usual!”

“No problem at all!” Bai Lin said enthusiastically. Laughing, he told Bai Xiaochun to go back to the Armory on his own, while he went back to discuss things with Song Yiduo.

Bai Xiaochun made his way back to the armory, his mood much better than before. By now, he had recovered from the sensation of deadly crisis. However, he couldn't forget the ordeal he had just gone through, nor the icy killing intent he had seen in the eyes of the necromancer who had attacked him.

“I can't believe that the Wildlanders were willing to sacrifice over a hundred savage giants, three soul cultivators, and a necromancer, all to try to kill me....” As of that moment, he made the decision to never go up onto the Great Wall itself unless it was absolutely necessary.

After all, once his new exploding furnace made its debut, and he started pumping out Soul Convergence Pills, the Wildlanders would hate him more than ever. Before long, his head would definitely fetch an astronomical price in the Wildlands.

That thought left his heart stirring with fear and fury both.

“I never wanted any of this,” he thought with a sigh. “But I guess there's nothing I can do about it. We're just on different sides, that's all.” Then he thought about the fact that he would be leaving in ten years, and breathed a sigh of relief...

“Might as well not worry about it. In ten years, I'll be gone

anyway. For now, I need to focus on battle credit, and even more importantly, getting myself into the great circle of the Gold Core stage. I also need to cultivate my Undying Live Forever Technique to completion. Once I do all that, I'll be in a much better position." After returning to the Armory, he went into secluded meditation and began to work on his cultivation.

Seven days sped by in a blur. Bai Xiaochun himself had no idea how Bai Lin and Song Yiduo managed it all, but on the eighth day, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's teleportation portal was activated, and a whole batch of supplies was sent to Great Wall City.

That afternoon, Bai Lin came personally to Bai Xiaochun's residence, and with the wave of his hand, sent a thousand pill furnaces rumbling down out of the sky.

There were also numerous bags of holding, plus something completely new. There were ten shocking pill furnaces, each of which was fully 300 meters tall. When they descended from the sky and landed onto the ground, everything in the area shook violently.

Dust blew out in all directions as incredible pressure weighed down. Zhao Long and all of the other soldiers under Bai Xiaochun's command looked at the pill furnaces with complete shock.

"Those... those are pill furnaces?"

"Heavens! I've never seen a pill furnace that big before!!"

"There's no way those are pill furnaces. Those are some kind of powerful magical treasure! Look at what they're made from! That's the same stuff they make Nascent Soul-level battleships from. Deep sea meteoric iron!" Even as their cries rang out, Bai Xiaochun emerged from his meditative trance and walked out of his room. When he saw the pill furnaces out in the courtyard, he gasped just as loudly as everyone else.

“Well, what do you think?!” Bai Lin said, laughing triumphantly. In order to procure all of these items, Bai Lin had been forced to beg for help from his grandfather, and had used every other method at his disposal. Furthermore, to produce these ten enormous pill furnaces, all of the power of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had been mobilized, and they had even called upon help from other parts of the eastern cultivation world.

The River-Defying Sect had been completely shaken when an emissary from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect arrived and respectfully asked many questions of them. At the same time, they got some news about Bai Xiaochun, leaving the entire River-Defying Sect very excited.

“Those are all of the medicinal plants you requested,” Bai Lin continued, pointing at all of the bags of holding. “By the way, this is about the limit of my abilities to procure resources....”

Feeling profoundly pleased, Bai Xiaochun rushed over to examine the bags of holding, his heart beating more rapidly with every moment. Within moments, his face was flushed with excitement.

Although there were no Nascent Soul Pills or nine-colored flame fuel, there were ten Godly Vestige Pills, as well as all of the medicinal plants he had requested. Although there wasn't a mind-bogglingly large number of them, everything he had asked for was present. Most importantly, the earthspirit tubers and other ingredients that could increase life force were all present in large numbers.

Eyebrows raised in delight, Bai Xiaochun nodded repeatedly as he inspected the bags. Next, he walked over to inspect the pill furnaces, including the 1,000 ordinary furnaces, and also the ten 300-meter-tall ones.

After examining the huge pill furnaces, Bai Xiaochun was delighted to find that in terms of quality, they actually exceeded the pill furnace he'd used on Lesser Marsh Peak. Furthermore, they

could also be sealed even tighter; the surfaces were covered with spell formations for just that purpose.

“Xiaochun, most of the things you requested are here. For the items that aren’t, give me some time to try to think of a way to get them. Right now, the most important thing to consider is that the biggest battle yet to be fought will be coming in the next few months!

“Therefore, time is of the essence. You need to start producing Soul Convergence Pills as quickly as possible, and also work on those ten destructive furnaces!” With a final deep look at Bai Xiaochun, Bai Lin turned and left.

Bai Xiaochun rubbed his hands together, eyes shining as he circled around the ten huge pill furnaces a few more times. Finally, he threw his back and laughed.

“Zhao Long. Liu Li. You and the rest of the battalion are going to help me make some unheard-of super-pills, the likes of which have never been seen before!” The 100 members of the battalion all voiced their agreement, whereupon the ten huge furnaces were set up in the middle of the courtyard, surrounded by the 1,000 ordinary furnaces in concentric rings.

Unfortunately, there were simply too many furnaces, so Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, issuing orders to his men to expand his residence. After tearing down and absorbing more of the nearby empty residences, he had a new courtyard that was fully 30,000 meters across, giving them more than enough space.

The first furnaces he started to work with were the huge ones. Bai Xiaochun knew that they were extraordinary, and therefore, used ten times as many earthflame stones as usual. In fact, he even went to the length of putting some of the stones inside the pill furnaces themselves. He also added numerous medicinal plants that would cause violent explosions when they got hot enough. For each type of plant, he was liberal with his usage, adding in

hundreds of portions.

“All I want is an explosion, right? For concocting other types of medicines, I need to put a lot of thought into the formula, but for exploding furnaces, it's simple.” Brimming with self-confidence, he walked among the ten huge pill furnaces, adding medicinal plants in here and there, and even adding in some low-quality Soul Convergence Pills he had concocted in the past.

He also added some of the other medicinal pills he had in his bag of holding that he didn't plan to use in the future. After a bit of thought, he also went so far as to add quite a few types of poison medicine....

Still worried that the explosions wouldn't be powerful enough, he gritted his teeth and added in many of the strange pills he had concocted in the past, pills that he would never dare to consume.

In the end, he had no idea exactly what type of bizarre medicinal pills would form within the furnaces, but the entire point was to make the ingredients inside of the furnaces unstable to the point where they would explode.

Finally, he patted his hands in satisfaction.

“That should do it,” he said, looking contentedly at the ten huge furnaces. By now, he very much looked forward to seeing what they would do when they finally exploded.

Having accomplished these things, he rested a bit before beginning to work with the 1,000 ordinary pill furnaces.

Chapter 491: Drum Of The Celestial Warrior!

Two months went by in the blink of an eye. As time passed, the 300-meter-tall pill furnaces gradually began to turn crimson, and emanate shocking levels of heat. However, Bai Xiaochun still wasn't completely satisfied, and would often add more earthflame stones.

To ensure that he got the best results possible, he even went to Bai Lin and asked if any top experts were available who could bless the flames. Bai Lin and Bai Xiaochun were on completely the same train of thought when it came to those ten huge furnaces, so Bai Lin didn't even hesitate for a moment before agreeing to his request.

In fact, Bai Lin personally went to seal the pill furnaces, and then had ten of his subordinates who were Nascent Soul cultivators come and converge Nascent Soul flames from their cultivation bases to help heat up the furnaces.

When Bai Xiaochun went out every day and saw ten Nascent Soul cultivators looking almost like living earthflame stones, he couldn't help but anticipate the results.

"I wonder what these things are going to end up doing?" Eventually, he was forced to simply suppress his curiosity and wait. During the two months which passed, he produced batch after batch of Soul Convergence Pills. In fact, he quickly reached the point where he was concocting more than 10,000 per day.

Zhao Long and the others would collect the completed pills, after which Bai Xiaochun would use his command medallion, which was connected to the pagoda and the huge eye, to brand them with divine sense. Then, cultivators sent by Bai Lin would take the pills away to be stored for distribution when the big battle came.

The reason the pills were branded with divine sense was so that Bai Xiaochun would get some battle credit when they were used in the fighting. He wouldn't get all the credit for each pill, but rather, thirty percent.

That was the agreement he and Bai Lin had come to. As for Bai Lin, since he was the financial backer of the pill, and also a general, he also received a small cut of all battle credit earned by the Skin Flayers. As for pills which ended up being used by the other four legions, Bai Lin would get a thirty percent cut.

The fact that everyone was profiting handsomely was quite pleasing to both Bai Lin and Bai Xiaochun. Bai Lin was already very protective of the Soul Convergence Pills, and had even sent a contingent of men over to stand guard over the Armory.

A large number of Soul Convergence Pills were created during those two months, and at the same time, Bai Xiaochun still managed to set aside plenty of time for cultivation. Although he currently wasn't making much in terms of battle credit, with all of the medicinal plants that had been delivered by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, his cultivation went on as normal. His frigid qi continued to grow stronger, and he was getting closer and closer to the great circle of the Gold Core stage.

However, his most rapid area of advancement was with his Undying Live Forever Technique. With so many earthspirit tubers at his disposal, all of them hundreds of years old, he had a shocking amount of life force to work with. As such, his entire left arm was now filled with Undying Tendons, and he was reaching the point of completion with his right arm.

Bai Xiaochun munched on earthspirit tubers the way a rabbit would munch on carrots on a daily basis. He even tended to nibble a bit here and there when concocting medicine. After another ten days passed, rumbling sounds echoed out into the evening sky as Bai Xiaochun's right arm came to be fully filled with Undying Tendons.

Everything down to his fingers throbbed with shocking power, and when he shot his right arm out with full speed in the form of a fist, cracking sounds filled the air.

Even more strangely, when he clenched his hand into a fist, it almost felt like he was grasping onto the fabric of space itself, and that by moving his hand, he could twist the air around him.

Looking down excitedly at his arms he said, "I've finished cultivating both arms and both legs!"

He could sense that his arms were now filled with incredible power and speed.

"This place is more of a holy land than the Blood Stream Sect was!" Bai Xiaochun was extremely excited. After all, the Undying Live Forever Technique was a huge drain on resources, and that trend only grew more pronounced the more one cultivated the technique. Without the chance occurrences that had led him to large amounts of resources, he would never have been able to cultivate it to its current level.

Before, he had been in the late Gold Core stage, but only had Undying Tendons in one of his legs.

But now, thanks to the indescribably valuable earthspirit tubers, he had advanced by leaps and bounds. Of course, one thing that Bai Xiaochun didn't know was that the amount of earthspirit tubers he had consumed so far was actually more than half of the available reserves for the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, reserves that had been built up over the course of many years. After all, few people in the cultivation world raised earthspirit tubers, which were fundamentally hard to grow. Most of them existed in arcane pocket realms, and only transformed into medicinal plants after having grown for a hundred years.

"Now the only parts left are my torso and head. At this rate, it should only be a few more years before I succeed completely with my Undying Tendons. At that point, I should be able to break

through... the third shackle!" The more he thought about it, the more excited he got. After experimenting a bit more with his newfound power, he looked up proudly, and mused about the fact that if he had a match with Eldest Brother Zhao Tianjiao, he would actually have a chance at victory.

"Aiya. I wish I could find a Nascent Soul expert to fight." However, after a moment passed, he realized that such an idea didn't make much sense, and quickly changed his mind. Clearing his throat, he murmured, "No need to be so impulsive...."

With that, he took a moment to readjust his thinking, then went back to cultivation.

Another month went by. One day, when Bai Xiaochun was in the middle of meditating, he suddenly heard what sounded like a war drum being beaten outside. The thunderous sound filled the entire city, and caused many cultivators to rush out and look up into the sky.

Zhao Long and the others were in the middle of watching over the pill furnaces in the courtyard when they heard the war drum, and their expressions instantly flickered. The ten Nascent Soul cultivators also opened their eyes and looked up in the direction of the tower and the eye.

That eye was where the sound of the war drum was coming from....

"The Drum of the Celestial Warrior!"

"We haven't heard the Drum of the Celestial Warrior for a long time!"

"Whenever that drum sounds, it means that an army of savages larger than 500,000 strong is coming!"

Even as the cries of alarm rose up, the beating of the drum caused the blood within the veins of the cultivators to flow more swiftly than before, Bai Xiaochun included. The sound of the drum filled

them with a desire to fight, and caused their bones and blood to vibrate. The sound even caused their cultivation bases to grow slightly more powerful.

That was the power of the Drum of the Celestial Warrior. Furthermore, there were additional benefits; all of the cultivators in Great Wall City found that they had begun to glow with a faint violet light.

That light was a type of armor that made their defenses stronger, and gave them a slight boost to agility.

Moments later, bugles began to sound, filling the city and drawing the attention of all cultivators of the five legions, no matter what they were doing.

Bai Xiaochun walked out of his room to find that Bai Lin was flying over toward him at top speed. A moment later, he came to a stop up in midair, his expression serious as he looked down at Bai Xiaochun.

“The Wildlands has sent an almighty Deva Realm expert, along with more than 100 necromancers, 1,000 soul cultivators, and 100 savage tribes with 700,000 giants. There are also innumerable beasts and souls. This is the major attack we’ve been waiting for!”

Bai Xiaochun shivered. Despite having been prepared for this moment, the news was still shocking.

“The deva patriarch has sent down orders that all cultivators in the city should prepare for battle. This is going to be the biggest fight we’ve had in years!

“Bai Xiaochun, I’ll be very busy commanding the army, and won’t have time to watch out for you. Make sure to take care of yourself in the coming battle.” With that, Bai Lin looked over at the ten huge pill furnaces. Although they were radiating intense heat, they had not yet reached the point of detonation. Unfortunately, there was nothing else that could be done. Bai Lin

noded at the ten Nascent Soul cultivators, who joined him as he flew off toward the wall.

Zhao Long and the rest of the battalion were already getting into their armor, and from their expressions, they hungered to do battle.

Ever since they had become Bai Xiaochun's followers, they hadn't gone out to fight on the battlefield. Now, with the Drum of the Celestial Warrior tugging at their hearts, their killing intent was burning hot, and their eyes were shining with the red light could only be seen among warrior cultivators from Great Wall City.

Bai Xiaochun looked around quietly at Zhao Long, Liu Li, and all of the other soldiers under his command. After a moment, he patted his bag of holding to produce numerous sets of armor, sundry magical items, countless bottles of medicinal pills, and stacks upon stacks of paper talismans. Although he didn't have so many items that they could be referred to as endless, he definitely had enough to equip more than a thousand soldiers for battle. Without any hesitation, he sent the items flying out to Zhao Long and the other hundred cultivators in the battalion.

"I'm your captain, and you fight under my banner!" he said. "Although I haven't given you much in the way of rewards up to this point, I've long since prepared for this battle. These magical items, medicinal pills, and paper talismans are for you!"

"One suit of armor, isn't enough, so I've prepared multiple sets for all of you. Make sure you're well covered! Ideally, all of you should make sure to wear your spirit helmets at all times! In terms of magical items, I've prepared more than twenty for each of you. Even if you just use them for the force they unleash when detonated, at least you'll be able to take down more of the enemy!"

"As we all know, you should never allow yourself to run low on medicinal pills, especially not in the middle of a battle! Therefore, I've prepared all sorts of pills for you, including pills to replenish

your cultivation base, to heal injuries, and even some poison pills!

“Remember, when you go out into battle, you represent me, Bai Xiaochun!

“Furthermore, I’ve personally prepared a set of 100 Soul Convergence Pills for each of you. As for orders for battle, I only have one.... As you go about killing the enemy... please... you absolutely must make sure to keep yourselves alive!” Bai Xiaochun’s voice quavered a bit by the end of his speech. Waving his sleeve, he sent numerous bottles of Soul Convergence Pills flying out to Zhao Long and the rest of the battalion.

Everyone was stunned, and soon, their eyes brimmed with gratitude. All of them knew that the things Bai Xiaochun was giving them had been purchased with his own battle credit.

Furthermore, everything was high quality, and would give them a clear advantage among anyone of the same cultivation level as them.

With that, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and unleashed his murderous aura. Eyes glinting, veins of steel pulsing, he turned into a beam of light as he led his battalion up to the Great Wall. “Let’s go!”

Chapter 492: Battle Of A Hundred Tribes

Before Bai Xiaochun and his battalion could even reach the Great Wall, a blood-colored cloud suddenly appeared on the horizon, spreading out with incredible speed.

Within the blood-red cloud were countless vengeful souls that looked quite different from the ordinary type. These souls were crimson, and seemed to contain something boundlessly evil.

As they neared, the souls began to clump together into the shape of a head, fully 9,000 meters tall. It was the face of a young woman, complete with long, flowing hair and eyes that sparkled with sinister coldness. Astonishingly, that head radiated an energy that seemed capable of rocking both heaven and earth!

Standing on the very top of the head was a young woman in a crimson garment, who was barely visible within the cloud. Although it was impossible to make out her features clearly, she radiated an aura that seemed to fuse with heaven and earth!

The scene playing out was completely and utterly shocking!

“Chen Hetian!!” the young woman cried in a voice that wasn’t loud, and yet echoed out in bizarre fashion, completely disregarding Great Wall City’s spell formation to fill the entire city. Anyone who heard the voice would sense their mind spinning, and would feel as if they were drowning in a sea of blood. Virtually all of the cultivators of the five legions, including the ones inside the city, couldn’t help but scream in response.

Bai Xiaochun was leading his 100-man battalion up to the wall when the sound hit them all. His subordinates immediately found blood oozing out of their eyes, ears, noses, and mouths, and began to shriek in fear. Bai Xiaochun also began to tremble; it felt like two daggers were stabbing into his ears, and it was only because of the Heaven-Dao aura within his Gold Core that he was mostly unscathed by the sound.

“A deva!” Bai Xiaochun gasped. At the same moment, the eye atop the enormous pagoda in the middle of the city suddenly cast bright light out.

Although it wasn't the dead of night at the moment, the sky was dark, casting all the lands into murkiness. Therefore, when the huge eye began to shine brightly, it made it look like a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering sun.

As the light spread out, the cultivators in Great Wall City and on the wall itself quickly recovered from the effects of the deafening noise, which was rapidly driven out past the shield.

Suddenly, an old man appeared within the huge eye, flashing through the air to appear high above Great Wall City. The instant he appeared, a ghost image sprang up resembling the entire city, which vanished moments later as he stepped out beyond the wall. “Back down Red-Dust, you she-devil!”

That old man was none other than Chen Yueshan's father and Zhao Tianjiao's Master, Chen Hetian!

He wore a long white robe, had a third eye on his forehead, and just like the young woman in red, seemed connected to both heaven and earth.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as these two shocking forces appeared out in the open. In the blink of an eye, Chen Hetian had reached the blood cloud, and vanished inside. Moments later, muffled rumbles like the crash of thunder echoed out from inside, and the cloud itself began to churn and seethe.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but gasp at the sight. Clearly, that young woman was a deva from the Wildlands, and the battle she was fighting with Chen Hetian was beyond that which ordinary cultivators could participate in.

Moments later, Bai Xiaochun and the rest of his battalion recovered, and proceeded up to the Great Wall. The first thing they

heard upon arriving were the booms and screams of the combat going on beyond the wall.

There were more than 700,000 savages from over a hundred tribes out there, a mighty force that was so awe-inspiring that Bai Xiaochun's eyes went as wide as saucers upon seeing them.

So many vengeful souls were gathered that it was impossible to see the end of them; within their midst were the giants, who were equally innumerable.

Based on the slight differences between them, these giants were clearly from more than a hundred different tribes, and interspersed among them as they charged toward the wall were numerous vicious beasts.

The lands quaked because of their passage, and even the Great Wall itself seemed to be swaying back and forth.

And that was just the land. Up in the sky were even more giants and vengeful souls, screaming through the air along with thousands of soul cultivators!

Among those soul cultivators could be seen both men and women, all of them good-looking, but with cold expressions. They were people who could attack with vicious power, and at the same time, could control the savages among whom they were scattered!

Further off in the distance were even more powerful figures, figures who were guarded closely by even more soul cultivators. Necromancers! Most of the necromancers wore dark robes, and with the single wave of a hand would send countless vengeful souls screaming out in front of them in devastating attacks.

Even further off in the distance were five black altars hovering in midair. Black beams of light shot out from the five altars, connecting together in a pentagram-like sealing pattern. High up in the sky, the pentagram split the air and cracked it open, allowing numerous ghostly hands to stretch out from beyond,

accompanied by cackling screams.

Atop each altar was a wrinkled old man in a black robe, all of whom were chanting scriptures that caused the rifts overhead to widen.

Those were merely the things Bai Xiaochun could see with his own eyes. The army was so huge that it was impossible to even see where it ended.

The vast size of the army left Bai Xiaochun wondering if the Great Wall forces could even hold out against it. As he looked around, he could see various expressions on the faces of the cultivators of the five legions. However, none of them were expressions of fear, as if this enormous army were nothing out of the ordinary.

It didn't take long for the Great Wall's shield to begin to ripple and distort, and then slowly begin to advance forward onto the battlefield. At the same time, the cultivators of the five legions began to break up into groups and charge forward to fight.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun received orders from the colonel who was his commanding officer, instructing him to lead his troops into the fight.

As the shield advanced across the battlefield, the forces of the Great Wall began to engage in close-quarters fighting with the Wildlanders.

The savage giants were the least difficult of the enemy forces to deal with, considering that they weren't very numerous. The vengeful souls which surrounded them didn't fear being destroyed, and had always been the most troublesome. However, that was before Bai Xiaochun came to the Great Wall.

As of this moment, it was to Bai Xiaochun's surprise that cultivators of the five legions were already tossing out Soul Convergence Pills into the fight.

Soon, the booms of exploding Soul Convergence Pill filled the air, as well as the shrieking of the vengeful souls who were sucked together in one place, and those who were destroyed in the secondary blast.

Not only were the vengeful souls affected in devastating fashion, but the savage giants were also injured by the explosions, and were sent staggering backward with blood spraying out of their mouths.

Even just one Soul Convergence Pill was powerful on its own, but to have more than a thousand exploding at the same time struck terror into the hearts of the Wildlands forces.

Thus, the five legions were able to advance slowly but surely across the battlefield!

In addition, the several thousand elite cultivators of the five legions were specifically targeting the soul cultivators and engaging them in deadly duels.

The sounds of fierce fighting filled the battlefield, and although everything seemed chaotic on the surface, the truth was that the Great Wall forces had the advantage, both because of their shield, and because of the Soul Convergence Pills.

As the shield inched across the battlefield, the five legions followed along, forcing the Wildlands savages to either retreat, or get stuck inside the shield to fight the cultivators, and eventually be cut down.

Furthermore, because of how the cultivators of the five legions were well-disciplined and frequently rotated their forces up to the front lines and back, there were few casualties. It was really a terrifying situation for the enemy.

It was the same on the ground and up in the air as well.

As for the huge eye atop the pagoda, its gaze swept across the battlefield, killing giants and decimating vengeful souls, hewing furrows into the earth and sending powerful ripples through the

sky.

Chapter 493: Soul Convergence Power!

Although the hundred Wildlander tribes vastly outnumbered the five legions, they were as disorganized as a plate of loose sand.

Normally speaking, the five legions would never have such an advantage. Considering how things normally went during such battles, the vengeful souls would always cause a huge headache for them, and also provide a powerful measure of defense for the Wildlanders.

Usually, the charge of the vengeful souls would prevent the Great Wall's shield from advancing across the battlefield, and could even push it back or threaten to break it.

After all, the attack of such a vast number of vengeful souls was difficult to even describe. Although a single soul couldn't do much to the spell formation shield, masses of them together were terrifying.

But now, as soon as that tide of souls got close to the five legions, Soul Convergence Pills were unleashed, instantly hewing out enormous spaces that were completely free of vengeful souls. Furthermore, the explosions would also injure the savages.

It was almost as if the Wildlands army had been grabbed by its figurative neck and was being shoved backward.

“Dammit, how come they have so many of those pills?!?!?”

“This is impossible! I thought the Great Wall only used pill furnaces!!”

“What kind of medicinal pill is that? I remember something like this happening once, but that was a single pill. Dammit! They’re throwing out thousands of them!!”

“How... how do we fight back against this?!?!?”

The fury of the tribal chiefs rose high into the heavens, and even

the soul cultivators were left frowning.

As for the esteemed necromancers, of which there were only a few more than a hundred, all they could do was force the vengeful souls to attack in an attempt to somehow reverse the situation. Unfortunately for them, that was no simple task.

“This is all the doing of that Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Dammit! If we don’t get rid of him, our Wildlands forces are going to suffer a huge loss!!” Numerous hateful gazes were cast toward the Great Wall from the tribal chiefs and the necromancers.

All of that made Bai Xiaochun quite nervous, and he even backed up a few steps in his position on top of the wall, worried that there might be another assassination attempt. Down on the battlefield, Zhao Long and the rest of the battalion were engaged in fierce fighting.

Compared to the five legions as a whole, Bai Xiaochun’s battalion wasn’t very large. However, they stuck out quite a bit. After all, they all wore multiple layers of armor, and when they attacked, they destroyed their opponents as easily as a boulder crushing a drinking glass. In moments of danger, they would toss out vast quantities of Soul Convergence Pills, to the point where the other cultivators of the five legions were looking over at them enviously.

Most over the top was how they wouldn’t hesitate to detonate their own magical items to defend themselves. Even some of the colonels in the army noticed what was happening.

“Whose men are those!?!?”

“Heavens! Look at how many Soul Convergence Pills they’re using. How do they have so many?!?!?”

“And the magical items! I just saw them blow up six at the same time! Those things are expensive!”

“That’s nothing. Look at how much armor they’re wearing. Five

or six layers at least! They don't even get hurt when the savage giants self-detonate!!”

The performance of Zhao Long and the rest of the battalion couldn't have been more eye-catching, and the numbers of vengeful souls and savages that they cut down far exceeded any of the other cultivators.

Nothing could stand in their way as they fought their way across the battlefield.

“Keep it up guys!” Bai Xiaochun shouted excitedly. Turning to some of the soldiers manning positions on the wall near him, he proudly said, “Those are my men! What do you think? Pretty awesome, huh?”

The other cultivators were left speechless by how well-equipped Bai Xiaochun's battalion was. Many of them even looked over at Bai Xiaochun and sighed in envy.

“They're not Skin Flayers, they've obviously become Grandmaster Bai's personal retinue....”

It was in that very moment that something like a sudden clap of thunder rang out in the distance. Bai Lin and the other leaders of the army were clearly startled, and as for Bai Xiaochun, his heart leapt in fear. Everyone looked over to see the clouds parting off in the distance as a river appeared!

The river was so wide it was almost like a sea, and was pitch black in color. Within those waters could be seen countless vengeful souls, all of them howling as they attempted to break free from the water. However, none of them seemed capable of doing so, and were swept away with the current.

“Underworld River!” someone shouted in alarm. Bai Xiaochun immediately backed up a bit more, looking up wide-eyed at the huge Underworld River. Moments later, an enormous hand suddenly appeared next to the flowing waters of the Underworld

River.

Instantly, incredible pressure erupted out, causing the Great Wall's spell formation shield to tremble. Even Chen Hetian, who was in the middle of battling the red-garbed young woman, was shocked by what was happening.

Next, the huge hand began to chop down like a blade, slashing into the Underworld River, causing intense, mind-numbing rumbling sounds to fill the air.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

It was with a deafening roar that the Underworld River was ripped open, creating something like a tributary that poured out in the direction of Great Wall City!

The gap that had been opened up began to close, but couldn't prevent a massive number of vengeful soul from pouring out. Black Underworld River water rushed through the air toward the battlefield, and the Great Wall shield.

Some of the savage giants weren't quick enough to react, and were swept up by the water. Screaming, they were dissolved away, instantly becoming part of the river itself.

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it happened so quickly that before anyone could react, the countless vengeful soul from the Underworld River had reached the Great Wall's shield.

A huge boom echoed out as the shield trembled in unprecedented fashion, and rapidly began to weaken!!!

As the shield weakened, it shrank back, forcing the cultivators of the five legions to retreat. Bai Xiaochun immediately began to get nervous.

As for Bai Lin, when he saw what was happening, he roared, "Everyone, toss out your Soul Convergence Pills! I refuse to believe these vengeful souls can't be vanquished!!"

The cultivators of the five legions gritted their teeth and began to toss out Soul Convergence Pills as they backed up.

It took only the briefest of moments for the sky to fill with countless medicinal pills. The pills were designed to affect the souls, not the waters of the Underworld River, and yet, they were still partially effective.

Furthermore, there were so many of them that when they exploded, they transformed into numerous whirlpools within the Underworld River.

Instantly, those whirlpools began to absorb the nearby vengeful souls, and at the same time, began to merge together with each other as they grew.

Soon, one gigantic whirlpool could be seen in the Underworld River, which sucked in a massive amount of soul bodies before it trembled and then detonated!

The blast spread out, sending Underworld River water splashing out in all directions, along with countless miserable shrieks.

Although the Great Wall's shield had been weakened, the cultivators of the five legions still had the advantage. The Underworld River began to fade away, and the gap that had been opened up in it had already closed up. Apparently, the hand which had opened the gap could only do so once.

Countless vengeful souls on the battlefield had been destroyed, and the ones which remained behind had been thrown into such chaos that the necromancers couldn't control them, and some even began to flee or attack the Wildlanders.

It was the perfect opportunity for the five legions to make their move. Without the slightest hesitation, Bai Lin sent out orders to counter-attack. The shield once again began to advance, the cultivators of the five legions moving with it.

Zhao Long and the other members of Bai Xiaochun's battalion

were like razor-sharp blades that slashed through the enemy with reckless abandon.

In response to everything which had just occurred, Bai Xiaochun frowned. Even he hadn't been aware that the detonation of his Soul Convergence Pills could be so devastatingly effective.

"Weird," he thought, blinking a few times. "I never thought they would be so powerful...." He could also see numerous leaders among the savage giants glaring at him in hatred. If looks could kill, then he would definitely have been chopped to pieces and boiled to death on the spot.

"Um...." For the first time, Bai Xiaochun actually felt a bit guilty. At the same time, he felt more in danger than ever. Sadly, they were just on different sides, and there was nothing he could do about it.

Chapter 494: Not The Time To Fear Death

As Bai Xiaochun's anxiety mounted, the twists and turns in the battle down below caused the red-garbed young woman fighting Chen Hetian to frown.

However, the intensity of the fight she was participating in ensured that she didn't have much attention to spare. The blood cloud surrounding her seethed, and rifts snaked out into the sky as a result of the attacks being unleashed.

As the cracking sounds rang out above, some of the rifts even reached down to the ground, almost like lightning bolts that caused huge explosions when they touched the soil.

Bai Xiaochun's scalp prickled in fear as he watched one of those rifts hit a soul cultivator who was comparable to the Nascent Soul stage. As soon as the rift touched him, he was ripped to shreds, destroyed in body and soul.

"Deva...." he breathed. This was his first time witnessing the true power of devas, and it left his mind reeling. The level of power on display far surpassed that which a human body could handle. It was something completely beyond what ordinary cultivators were capable of dealing with.

"Merge oneself with heaven and earth," he murmured, "and borrow their boundless might...." From his perspective, everything around Chen Hetian and the red-garbed young woman became weapons to use at their disposal, whether it was the wind, or the clouds, or other things. Anything in heaven and earth could be used like divine abilities!

There were also illusory forms which took shape around them, figures from ancient times which began to battle each other....

Thankfully, the Great Wall still had the overall advantage in the battle. The cultivators of the five legions continued to advance,

and the tide of souls was pushed away. Without the vengeful souls to protect them, the army of 700,000 savage giants had to fight the five legions directly, and were suffering one setback after another.

Bai Xiaochun felt quite relieved because of that. After all, despite having participated in quite a few wars, this was definitely the largest one he had ever been part of.

However, in the exact moment in which Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief, the over one hundred necromancers among the Wildlands forces suddenly looked up. Because of how the necromancers had just lost control of the vengeful souls, that meant that they now had attention to spare. One by one, they began to settle down cross-legged, after which they pulled out black sticks of incense, the smoke of which they inhaled deeply, causing them to instantly slip into deep trances.

Moments later, even as large groups of soul cultivators approached to guard them, shadowy figures appeared above the heads of the necromancers!

They were the necromancers' own souls, which emanated shocking auras as they then shot toward the Great Wall's shield!

Although the shield could keep most Wildlanders out, with the help of the incense they had just inhaled, the necromancers could now pass through it!

This was almost the same thing which had occurred during the assassination attempt on Bai Xiaochun!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw the souls flying out of the necromancers, he backed up again. As he did, the souls became beams of light that shot forth and pierced through the Great Wall's shield.

Without hesitation, the five generals of the various legions, Bai Lin included, flew forth to meet the necromancer souls in battle, followed by the various major generals of the armies.

The souls of the necromancers were thus prevented from reaching the Great Wall itself. Furthermore, the huge eye also began to shoot out terrifying, destructive beams of light.

At the same time, the savage giants received new orders from their tribal chiefs. Eyes turning red, they howled and began to charge toward the Great Wall, disregarding all danger to themselves!

Booms rang out as they began to self-detonate, throwing themselves fearlessly at the shield, which began to distort and weaken once again!

The Wildlanders were making a major offensive!

Tens of thousands of giants blew themselves up, instantly shoving the shield backward across the battlefield. Many of the cultivators of the five legions who weren't quick to react were caught up in the explosions and died screaming.

However, such screams paled in comparison to the screams of the cultivators who the giants managed to grab ahold of.

Bai Xiaochun's face went pale when the sounds reached his ears. He even personally watched as two of the giants ripped a cultivator in half and began to eat him alive. As a result, both giants clearly began to head toward a cultivation base breakthrough.

The savages also practiced cultivation, but instead of using spiritual energy, they absorbed soul power. However, that didn't mean that they didn't desire to absorb spiritual energy. In fact, they found spiritual energy to be delicious!

“Eat them!!”

“It's been a long time since I dined on a cultivator....”

“Hahaha! Now that's the flavor I'm talking about!!” The savage giants charged forward with madness, grabbing any cultivators they could get their hands on and devouring them as ravenously as wild beasts.

Some of them continued to self-detonate, explosions which not only weakened the shield, but also completely destroyed any cultivators unlucky enough to get caught up in them.

Bai Xiaochun's ashen face began to flush in response to what he was witnessing. Although he had heard that the savages ate human flesh, this was his first time seeing it actually happen.

"Now is not the time to fear death!!" he growled through gritted teeth. Although he had felt a bit guilty earlier because of his Soul Convergence Pills, now that he saw the brutality of the Wildlanders on full display, his heart suddenly turned cold and grim.

After a moment of silence, he spun and shot back down to Great Wall City, transforming into a beam of bright light that headed directly toward the Armory.

Back in the Armory, numerous pill furnaces were set up in concentric rings. Although the ten 300-meter-tall furnaces weren't being attended by the Nascent Soul cultivators anymore, they were still bright red, and were emanating intense heat waves.

Bai Xiaochun quickly examined the ten huge pill furnaces, then took a deep breath and waved his sleeve. In response, all of the huge furnaces rumbled up into midair and then began to circulate around Bai Xiaochun.

Then, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing numerous sealing marks to fly out to the furnaces, backed by the power of his Gold Core and filled with a Heaven-Dao aura. As they sank into the pill furnaces, muffled sounds like thunder began to echo out.

Although the huge pill furnaces had not quite reached the point of detonation yet, Bai Xiaochun was a skilled apothecary, and naturally had his ways of forcing them to explode early. By relying on the external power of the sealing marks he had just unleashed, he could prematurely destabilize the medicine within the furnaces.

Although the resulting detonation would be slightly less effective, a huge amount of power had already built up in the furnaces during the past several days. Having placed his sealing marks onto the furnaces, he shot back up toward the Great Wall, furnaces in tow.

When he returned, quite a few cultivators of the five legions noticed him, as did many of the Wildlands savages. After all, the 300-meter-tall furnaces were completely eye-catching, especially considering that they were all bright red, and emanated shocking fluctuations.

“Those are....”

“Grandmaster Bai’s pill furnaces!!”

Expressions of excitement and profound anticipation appeared on the faces of the cultivators of the five legions.

Similar expressions could be seen on the faces of the generals and major generals who were fighting the necromancer souls, especially Bai Lin.

As for the faces of the necromancer souls, they flickered with shock, and the Wildlands savages gasped.

The tribal chiefs were especially astonished.

“They’re... they’re so huge!!”

“Heavens....”

Before anyone could recover from their shock, Bai Xiaochun flew up into the air above the Great Wall, howling as he hurled the ten enormous furnaces out over the battlefield. They were like ten burning suns that pierced through the air, sailing right into the army of countless savages.

In that instant, the entire battlefield went quiet, and all eyes came to be fixed onto the burning, sun-like pill furnaces....

Chapter 495: Devil Bai

The chiefs of the more than one hundred Wildlands tribes were all completely shaken.

During the course of previous skirmishes, the power of the exploding pill furnaces they had seen left them completely shocked. Now, the sheer size of the furnaces they were looking at left them incapable of even breathing.

“They’re... they’re so huge!!”

“If those ten furnaces explode....” The chiefs’ eyes went wide as their hearts were slammed by waves of shock. And they weren’t the only ones. Upon seeing the furnaces, the tens of thousands of madly charging giants were suddenly overwhelmed by painful memories.

“Devil Bai!!”

“Dammit, it’s that Devil Bai!!”

In their terror, countless numbers of giants tried to retreat. Devil Bai was the nickname the Wildlands tribes had given to Bai Xiaochun after the appalling scenes of devastation he had wreaked upon them.

Not even Bai Xiaochun was aware that he had been given that nickname, and yet, it was already widely known in the Wildlands.

In that moment in which all eyes were locked on the pill furnaces, a shrill cry suddenly rang out from within the Wildlands forces. “Pay any price to lock down those pill furnaces!!”

Instantly, numerous soul cultivators and tribal chiefs all drew upon the full power of their cultivation bases to summon a massive, all-encompassing net.

The net shot across the battlefield with incredible speed, and in the blink of an eye, had reached the pill furnaces. Although the net

managed to block some of the furnaces, the furnaces were moving so quickly that four of them managed to slam into the ground, instantly crushing the giants who had been too slow to evade them.

As soon as they touched the ground, a deafening boom rang out that could shake heaven and earth, a sound that surpassed everything else on the battlefield, a sound that rose to the highest heavens and the furthest reaches of the earth!

As the first of the 300-meter-tall pill furnaces filled with cracks and exploded, lands shook and mountains were rocked. It was like the end of days as a blue sea of flames erupted out from the location of the pill furnace, instantly spreading out to fill an area ten of thousands of meters across.

Wherever the blue flames passed, agonized shrieks rose up as the giants were incinerated. In addition to the flames, the shrapnel from the furnace itself became meteoric blades of flame that slashed through everything in their path!

And things weren't over yet! There was also a shockwave which spread out, picking up the burning giants and hurling them violently across the battlefield.

The boom of the explosion made it seem like heavenly lightning was crashing into the earth in an unceasing waterfall. Simultaneously, tendrils of five-colored smoke spread out rapidly, boring into the bodies of the giants, provoking bloodcurdling screams as the giants' flesh began to rot and decay.

Others amongst the giants were seemingly struck senseless, and simply stood there unmoving as the flames burned them away!

And yet... things still weren't over! The second pill furnace cracked and exploded, then the third and the fourth. One by one, massive explosions ripped across the battlefield, filling an area 300,000 meters across, and transforming it into little more than rubble!!

And that was only four of the pill furnaces. The other six had been wrapped up by the huge net and sealed.

Even still, the explosion of those four pill furnaces was a devastating blow to the Wildlanders!

Vast numbers of giants were burned alive. Meteor-like shrapnel pierced bodies left and right, and the shockwave sent countless savages tumbling across the battlefield.

Most calamitous of all was the five-colored smoke!

That smoke didn't leave a single living thing in its wake. It was the result of countless types of strange pills whose medicinal effects touched the savages in ways that not even Bai Xiaochun could have anticipated.

Agonized shrieks continued to ring out as blood sprayed out of the mouths of the soul cultivators, many of whom were sent tumbling backwards. Furthermore, those four pill furnaces had not only killed countless savages, but they had also wreaked incalculable damage on the survivors.

Those surviving giants... had their will to fight destroyed! Their determination was cut away, and as they backed away, their eyes were filled with fear, astonishment, and utter incredulity.

"Devil... Devil... Bai!!" Chaotic cries of alarm began to ring out, as if they were the only way to dispel the terror felt in the hearts of the Wildlanders. When their horrified gazes turned toward Bai Xiaochun on the Great Wall, he could sense how fearful they were.

Actually, it wasn't just the savage giants who were reacting in such a way. As of this point, many of the cultivators of the five legions had forgotten to breathe, and were looking over at Bai Xiaochun with looks of extreme reverence and awe.

He had created the original exploding pill furnaces, and he had concocted the Soul Convergence Pills. As for the supernova-like detonations just now, they had also originated with him.... He had

crushed the enemy with impunity over and over again, to the point where every last individual among the five legions knew his name.

As the effects of the explosion began to fade away, it became clear that the space in front of the five legions on the battlefield was almost completely empty.... There were only four enormous craters... and six ruined furnaces that had not exploded.

The battlefield was almost completely silent, the only sounds to be heard coming from the deva battle, and the fighting of the souls of the necromancers against Bai Lin and the other leaders of the armies. Everyone else on the battlefield was simply staring in complete and utter shock.

Further off in the distance were the five altars in pentagram form and the black beams of light. The black-robed old men sitting there chanting scriptures were trembling as they looked out at the battlefield. Then they glanced up at the devas fighting, and then looked silently over at Bai Xiaochun standing on the Great Wall.

Despite how far away they were, it was almost as if he were standing right in front of them.

Currently, Bai Xiaochun was staring with gaping jaw at the battlefield. After a moment passed, he remembered to breathe, after which, his heart began to thump in fear. At the same time, he realized that his battle credit was rising at shocking speed.

“At this rate, I'm definitely going to be promoted to colonel!” Even as his heart began to swell with excitement, a gaze was suddenly leveled upon him from within the blood cloud.

At the same time, a stream of blood mist shot out in his direction; it was none other than an attack by the Deva Realm young woman in red clothing.

However, there was no way Chen Hetian would simply allow that to happen. Laughing loudly, he blocked the attack, and then, the fighting between the two of them resumed at even more intense

levels.

At first, Bai Xiaochun was startled, but seeing that the attack couldn't reach him, he sighed in relief. However, before even half of that sigh could escape his lips, more gazes fell upon him from within the Wildlands army. Those gazes came from the numerous tribal chiefs, all of whom were now staring fixedly at Bai Xiaochun.

The ferocity and madness in those gazes completely surpassed anything from before....

“What are they all looking at me for...? Well, I think my work is done here anyway. This place is way too dangerous now. I'll just head off the wall.” Having made his decision, he was just about to leave when, all of a sudden, a howl rippled through the air that seemed intense enough to shred the heavens.

As it did, the rifts which had previously opened up in the heavens were completely ripped open, creating a pentagram-shaped hole.

Muffled cries could then be heard. “Hungry... so hungry....”

At the same time, one terrifying ghost hand after another stretched out, which quickly grabbed the black-robed old men and dragged them up into the rifts.

The old men didn't resist at all! They simply allowed the ghost hands to drag them up, whereupon sickening crunching sounds echoed out!!

That strange scene instantly caused the cultivators of the five legions to stare in shock, and threw their breathing into chaos.

As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes went wide as he looked at the pentagram-shaped opening up in the sky, a bad feeling rising up in his heart. Even as he began to race backward toward the city, an incredible rumbling sound erupted from the pentagram, revealing a gargantuan mouth!

Apparently, that mouth existed in some location beyond the heavens, and was so huge that the opening could only reveal part

of it.

It was greenish, with black teeth that were stained with blood and gore. Almost as soon as that mouth appeared, more words could be heard.

“Hungry... so hungry...!” Even as everyone was shaken, the mouth shifted to face the direction of the Great Wall and then begin to inhale deeply....

Heaven and earth dimmed, and everything began to shake as an indescribable gravitational force erupted from the mouth. Not even the spell formation shield could do anything to stop it, and within moments, many of the cultivators of the five legions were shocked to find themselves flying up into the air, their bodies completely beyond their own control!

Whooshing sounds could be heard as more than half of the five legions’ cultivators were suddenly sucked beyond the shield and toward the huge mouth!

There were quite a few cultivators on the Great Wall itself who were affected, even Bai Xiaochun. Trembling, he found that he was completely incapable of retreating. A scream escaped his lips as he was sucked off of the Great Wall and out onto the battlefield beyond the shield.

Chapter 496: I'm Friends With Your Commanding Officer

“Noooo....” Bai Xiaochun screamed. However, the incredible gravitational force simply plucked him off of the wall and sent him flying out into the air and past the spell formation shield.

A sensation of profound crisis filled Bai Xiaochun, rumbling in his mind like heavenly thunder and causing his face to drain of blood.

Even as he screamed, he looked around and realized that there were many other cultivators of the five legions who, just like him, were being sucked toward the enormous mouth behind the pentagon.

Some of them had already reached the mouth itself, and were being shredded into masses of blood and gore. The entire battlefield was shaken by their screams; this was a huge blow to the forces of the Great Wall!

The mouth was like a hungry ghost, and the gravitational force exerted by it caused heaven and earth to grow dim. The screaming winds swept the cultivators through the air, who were now calling upon all sorts of techniques to try to protect themselves.

Some used secret magics, others used powerful magical treasures. Some combined the two. A few even called upon their powerful trump cards!

Some succeeded and some failed. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was so scared out of his mind that he could only think of one thing.

“I can’t let myself reach that mouth....” Gritting his teeth, he opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, whereupon intense fluctuations of spiritual power erupted out, transforming into a restrictive spell that instantly tried to lock him in place.

However, it wasn’t very useful.... As he watched himself flying

over the heads of the savage giants, and as the enormous ghost mouth grew larger, Bai Xiaochun truly started to get anxious.

Eyes completely bloodshot, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then slapped his hands onto his chest.

“Living Mountain Incantation!!” he shouted at the top of his lungs. Instantly, his body began to expand, almost as if he were being surrounded by countless boulders. As the boulders merged together and swirled around him, he flew along another 300 meters or so, whereupon Bai Xiaochun wasn’t visible anymore. Instead, he had been replaced by a huge stone golem!!

He was now 300 meters tall, like a small mountain, and also much heavier than before. Even with the gravitational force tugging at him, he suddenly lurched to a stop, and began to fall downward!

Then, he landed on the ground with a boom, causing shockwaves to roll out from the point of impact. However, despite being on the ground, he was still being pulled toward the mouth.

Bai Xiaochun’s stone golem face bore the same features as his normal face, except that they were twisted ferociously as he threw his head back and howled. Shoving his hands forward, he stabbed them into the ground in front of him, causing everything to tremble!

Using all the power at his disposal, he shoved himself like a nail into the ground, ensuring that, no matter how wildly the gravitational force tugged at him, he didn’t move.

The gravitational force didn’t last for very long, only about ten breaths of time. Then the mouth behind the pentagram rift closed, taking the blood and gore that remained of the cultivators it had sucked away with it. Then, the rift slowly began to close up.

Bai Xiaochun was shivering, his breath coming in ragged pants as he reverted from his Living Mountain Incantation form to normal.

Seeing the huge mouth fade away, he felt as if he had just passed through a deadly tribulation.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one among the cultivators of the five legions to have resisted the gravitational force exerted by the mouth. After all, considering that there were hundreds of thousands of cultivators among the forces of the Great Wall, it was impossible for the mouth to have affected them all. Furthermore, many of them had trump cards of their own to use, and as such, had been able to pass through the tribulation.

However, there was no time to rejoice. As the surviving cultivators looked around, they realized that they were surrounded by numerous Wildlands giants, whose cold eyes seemed to flicker with ravenous hunger!

The truth was that the Wildlanders didn't necessarily care whether or not the huge mouth actually consumed many of the five legions cultivators. They simply wanted to get them outside of the shield.

As long as they were outside of that shield and within reach of the army, then most of their lives would be within the hands of the Wildlanders!

The generals and major generals of the armies were in the middle of fighting the necromancer souls, and were unable to do anything other than shout, "Fall back immediately!"

At the same time, more beams of light began to shoot out from the enormous eye to attack enemies on the battlefield. Simultaneously, the spell formation shield began to advance, hoping to bring the exposed cultivators back under its protection.

Some of the cultivators who were close to the shield to begin with were able to retreat behind it with reckless bursts of speed. However, there at least 200,000 who were too far away to make it, or who were blocked by the vast numbers of giants!

“Kill them!!” the tribal chiefs shouted. The truth was that the savage giants on the battlefield didn’t need any orders to do just that. Roaring, they began to charge the nearest cultivators!

Hundreds of thousands immediately intercepted the cultivators who had been pulled beyond the shield, making it impossible for them to retreat!

Lingering fear could still be seen on Bai Xiaochun’s ashen face, and he was still trembling. His heart felt cold as he looked around at the battlefield, almost on the verge of tears. Moments ago, he had been safe on the wall, relishing the sensation of having so much battle credit being added to his name. But now, he was now surrounded by the enemy, and in mortal danger.

This turn of events was too sudden, and he almost couldn’t accept it. However, as he looked around at the scores of savage giants, he realized he had no choice. All of them were glaring at him with madness and greed as they rushed in his direction, cackling madly.

“Devil Bai’s here! Kill him!!”

“Hahaha! I can’t believe Devil Bai is right in front of me!!”

“He’s mine! I’m gonna eat him!”

Bai Xiaochun almost felt like his head was going to explode as the giants neared. They were so close that he could smell the rotting stench that came from their mouths.

His eyes were bloodshot, and the sensation of deadly crisis was like a needle slowly poking into his mind. However, it was in that moment that, all of a sudden, his veins of steel began to pulse, and a murderous aura erupted out.

“Hey, I’m... I’m friends with your commanding officer....” he said. However, the clever words which came out of his mouth did no good. This was not a situation in which he could retreat, and as such, his fleshly body began to pulse with power.

“My flesh belongs to me, not you people!! You want me dead? Well you’re gonna regret it!” With that, he slapped his bag of holding, causing numerous suits of armor to fly out. Most people would, at most, wear a few sets of armor at the same time. But somehow, Bai Xiaochun was using a strange method to don far more than was normal. Plus, he was putting them on with blinding speed.

Flying swords flew out to surround him, as well as magical items. Within the blink of an eye, he was surrounded by scintillating, multicolored light.

And yet, things weren’t over yet. Stacks of paper talismans appeared, which he slapped all over himself, then activated, creating a glittering shield with more than a thousand layers.

Quicker than words could describe, Bai Xiaochun was armed to the teeth, which was when the dozens of incoming savage giants slammed into him. These giants all had profound cultivation bases that were comparable to Core Formation. However, they were completely incapable of penetrating Bai Xiaochun’s defenses, and in fact, were hit with a backlash that sent them stumbling backward, blood spraying out of their mouths.

The other nearby giants stared, dumbstruck.

“Dammit, I can’t believe he’s wearing more than ten suits of armor! How do we pierce through that!?”

“And look at all the paper talismans! Even one of them alone would be very expensive, and he’s using more than a thousand!!”

“Heavens! He’s like a living bag of holding!”

Considering that he was temporarily invincible, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and mustered his courage. Seemingly ready to put his life on the line, he charged toward the nearby giants.

“You people push things too far!!” he roared. Although some observers might think that having so many suits of armor,

defenses, magical items, flying swords, and the like would be very cumbersome, they didn't affect his speed at all. In the briefest of moments, he was upon the nearest savage giant, whom he slammed into before a reaction was even possible.

Chapter 497: Going All Out!

Even as the savage giant was shoved away, Bai Xiaochun's right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he pointed out, sending a dozen flying swords out at top speed, completely cutting off the giant's path of retreat.

There was no time for the giant to even react. In the blink of an eye, miserable shrieks rang out as the flying swords slashed him to pieces.

He died so quickly that he didn't even have a chance to self-detonate before being destroyed in body and soul.

Bai Xiaochun didn't hesitate for even a moment. After cutting the giant down, he exploded into action, bearing down on the next giant and waving his hand to send his flying swords forward.

The giant wanted to evade, but Bai Xiaochun was too quick, and within moments, the giant's head was flying through the air!

As that happened, more giants closed in and prepared to attack.

Bai Xiaochun looked up, simultaneously reaching out with his right hand and then slamming it into the ground, causing rumbling sounds to echo out, as well as a gale force wind. The savage giants' faces fell as Bai Xiaochun unleashed incredible speed to fight back against more than ten of them at the same time.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Although the scene playing out now didn't count for much when considering the battlefield as a whole, in that particular area, Bai Xiaochun was a like a god of death!

The giants in the area couldn't do anything to stop him or even obstruct his path. However... overall, there were just too many savage giants.

It didn't take long before more than a hundred of them were

unleashing deadly attacks. Bai Xiaochun's defenses were beginning to crumble, one layer at a time. And yet, his eyes were completely bloodshot, and even gleaming with madness.

“What a bunch of bullies! I can't believe all of you are ganging up on one person!” Both offended and enraged, he shot forward like a meteor, then slammed into the chest of one of the giants, who flew backward uncontrollably. However, the rest of the more than one hundred giants were circling around him, cutting off all avenues of escape. Finally, Bai Xiaochun slapped his bag of holding and tossed out a big handful of medicinal pills.

As they flew through the air, they exploded, sending streams of hallucination smoke out in all directions. As soon as the smoke bored into giants' bodies, they began to act very strangely, giving Bai Xiaochun the perfect opportunity to break past them.

However, even as he did, hundreds more howling giants poured toward him, their killing intent surging. There were even a few in the lead position who reeked of the aura of self-detonation.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened. By this point, he couldn't evade even if he wanted to. More than ten savage giants all self-detonated simultaneously, sending corrosive blood out in all directions. Bai Xiaochun's face fell as a huge portion of his defenses crumbled. And yet, he borrowed some of the force of the momentum to flee!

Unfortunately, the battlefield was huge, and he was a great distance from the spell formation shield. There was no way he could make it to the shield in any short period of time, and furthermore, hundreds of savage giants were swarming forth to surround him.

“You're dead, Devil Bai!”

“I'm gonna eat ya!!” As the giants closed in, more fierce fighting broke out. The madness in Bai Xiaochun's eyes burned hotter than ever as he waved his hand, causing roughly thirty percent of the magical items swirling around him to explode.

The shocking force released by the detonation of the magical items sent hundreds of savages tumbling backward with blood spraying out of their mouths. However, before Bai Xiaochun even had an opportunity to flee, more giants began to close in on him.

Shockingly, they appeared to be trying to bury him with numbers.

Cold grins appeared on the faces of the distant tribal chiefs. As of this point, they were certain that as long as nothing unexpected happened, Bai Xiaochun would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt. However, some of the chiefs even began to head in his direction.

As for the other chiefs, they headed in other directions to start fighting the five legions' colonels who had been pulled out past the shield!

As the battlefield sank into chaos, Chen Hetian's anxiety began to mount. Never before had the Wildlands used tactics like this, and it had caught him completely unprepared. Unfortunately, considering how he was being pinned down by the red-garbed young woman, there was little he could do reverse the situation.

Although Bai Lin and the other generals and major generals were still inside of the protection of the spell formation, the necromancer souls they were fighting were extremely dangerous and vicious.

The entire tide of battle had been reversed in the shortest of moments. The shield continued to advance, and more cultivators were returning to its safety, but too many of the five legions' forces had been separated, making it difficult for them to extricate themselves from danger.

Because of the recent turn of events, the battlefield had quickly become a sea of blood!

Bai Xiaochun's throat was already hoarse from the shouting. He

was completely inundated by a sensation of deadly crisis, and was spattered with blood and gore. Considering how he was being completely surrounded, he finally had to abandon his idea of trying to use frigid qi to teleport to safety.

Although he had put on an impressive performance so far, the truth was that up until now, he had mostly been relying on fleshly body power. After all, he was outside of the Great Wall, where there was almost no spiritual power at all. If he used magical techniques, he would not be able to replace the spiritual energy they used, and would quickly drain himself.

Once that happened, death would be just around the corner!

Therefore, he could only use spiritual power in the most critical of moments. Gritting his teeth, he decided to detonate another large portion of magical items.

An earth-shaking explosion rang out, and more savage giants were seriously injured. However, the bloodthirsty madness in their eyes shone brightly as, instead of retreating, they lunged forward and self-detonated.

The booms sounded like drums of death that finally battered through the remaining layers of Bai Xiaochun's personal shields.

His armor could only hold out for so long, and even the detonation of his last group of magical items barely allowed him to break through. By that point, his armor was crumbling into dust.

Behind him was a pile of corpses. In the short amount of time that the fighting had been going on, Bai Xiaochun's strength and madness had shocked the nearby giants to the core!

"I can't believe Devil Bai... single-handedly killed so many of us!"

"Dammit! Not only is he shockingly skilled at concocting medicine, but his battle prowess is incredible! He can't be left alive! I'm definitely gonna eat him!"

"He has shocking levels of defense, but at the moment, is right

out in the open. He's definitely going to die today!" Roaring, the giants once again raced to surround him. Among the group were three who were larger and fiercer than the others, and also faster. They were the first to close in on him.

Bai Xiaochun's face was ashen, and he was stooped over, panting for breath. The giants were closing in on him like a rising tide, and it almost seemed impossible for him to kill all of them. When he heard their roars, and smelled the reek of blood in the air, his eyes turned crimson.

"You think you can kill me just because I ran out of defenses?" All of a sudden, he started laughing, a laughter that contained no small amount of madness. By this point, he had already decided to throw caution to the wind. It was obvious that he was in a deadly predicament, and if he didn't go all out, he wouldn't even have a chance of making it out alive.

Continuing to laugh, he stood up straight, and his fleshly body power began to thrum. Then, a blast of wind shot out in all directions as his skin turned completely golden, and the illusory image of a Heavenly King appeared behind him. Simultaneously, numerous complex magical symbols that resembled hexing marks appeared all over his legs and arms.

His Undying Live Forever Technique was now on full display!

With that, he took a step forward, and then unleashed... the Mountain Shaking Bash!

The sudden development happened too quickly for the three of the fastest giants to react. A moment later, a string of afterimages stretched out as Bai Xiaochun shot forward toward the nearest of them.

That giant had originally been grinning in confidence because of his own incredible fleshly body strength. However, when Bai Xiaochun slammed into him, his eyes went wide, and before he could cry out... he was launched into the air with a bang!

The cracking sound of breaking bones could be heard, and blood spurted out in all directions. Finally, the giant screamed, and yet before he could land on the ground, a pop could be heard as he exploded into a cloud of blood and gore!

A single move on Bai Xiaochun's part had killed him in body and soul!

Chapter 498: Who Else Wants To Die!

After exterminating the first giant, Bai Xiaochun spun to face the other two incoming giants. Just when they were about to unleash attacks, Bai Xiaochun grinned viciously and lifted his right hand. Even as the second giant was striking out with his fist, Bai Xiaochun's hand moved as quickly as lightning to grasp onto his throat.

His hand wasn't even big enough to wrap around that throat, and yet his hand still contained incredible destructive power. In the blink of an eye, his two fingers clamped down with crushing strength!

Black light spread out, and the giant's throat and neck were crushed!

It was none other than the Throat Crushing Grasp!

Things weren't over yet, though. After killing the second giant, Bai Xiaochun's right foot swept through the air toward the third giant, who was just preparing to slash at him with a serrated greatsword.

However, when Bai Xiaochun's right foot slammed into the sword, cracking sounds rang out as the sword shattered. Then Bai Xiaochun's foot contacted the giant's arm, reducing it to a haze of gore. Even as the giant screamed, black threads spread out to completely seal him!

Apparently, the sealing was an indescribably painful one. Continuing to scream, the giant dropped to his knees, unable to move.

It was none other than the Undying Hex!

"Who else wants to die!?!?" Bai Xiaochun growled. His skin was gold, his hair was flying in the wind, and his murderous aura was as explosive as ever. He looked like some sort of god!

As he glared at the other savage giants in the area, his eyes radiated madness and ferocity, causing the savages to hesitate, their eyes shining with disbelief.

They had just witnessed how powerful he was, even when surrounded by more than a thousand giants. Before, they had assumed he was impressive only because of his defenses, but now they had watched him kill three of their own in a row, even without any defenses to back him up.

Not a single one of them dared to respond to his challenge....

He had killed three giants with precision and ruthlessness. However, it had not been a simple task; they had not been ordinary savages, but rather, had cultivation bases comparable to the great circle of Core Formation. They were actually half a step into the Nascent Soul stage.

So far, Bai Xiaochun's Undying Live Forever Technique was the key to everything. Because of how it helped him recover quickly, it ensured that his battle prowess remained very potent for a long time.

In fact, although his murderous aura made him seem very threatening at the moment, he was actually taking time to relax and build back some energy.

It was in that moment that a voice rang out from off in the distance. "Here I come!"

Then, the ground began to tremble, and Bai Xiaochun looked up to see a 300-meter-tall giant running in his direction, clad in beast pelts.

The giant's hair was flying about crazily, and a ferocious expression could be seen on his scar-covered face. He made a very impressive sight, and clearly possessed massive amounts of power. As for the other giants, they rushed to make way for this newcomer, expressions of reverence on their faces.

As the giant got closer and closer, the other giants began to howl excitedly.

“King!”

“King!!”

“King!!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s heart immediately started pounding. It wasn't quite clear what the other giants meant; was ‘king’ this giant’s name? Either way, the simple wave of his hand knocked all of the other giants out of the way.

Almost in the same moment that Bai Xiaochun looked over at him, the giant glared at him with vicious rage and then lifted his food to stomp on him!

“Time to die!!” Both in terms of size and speed, this giant was completely shocking, and fairly radiated intense fleshly body power.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes nearly popped out of his head, and yet he knew that he wouldn’t be able to evade this attack. If he even tried to, he would quickly be surrounded and overwhelmed by the other giants in the area.

“You’ll be the one dying!!” Bai Xiaochun yelled, his anger burning. Instead of trying to avoid the giant’s descending foot, he clenched his hand into a fist and struck out!

From a distance, the two opponents were so mismatched it almost seemed like a joke. The giant was 300 meters tall, whereas Bai Xiaochun was like a tiny ant. And yet, he was relying on his fleshly body power to fight back with a fist strike!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

A deafening boom filled the sky, causing the entire battlefield to tremble!

At the same time, a shockwave rolled out in all directions!

When Bai Xiaochun's fist made contact with the giant's foot, he began to shake. Howling, he poured all of the power he could into the fist strike, causing his skin, his bones, and even his blood to begin to vibrate.

It was almost as if his life force and body itself were about to be destroyed!

“How could I possibly die in this place!?!?” Bai Xiaochun howled. Pulses of boundless power rippled through him, originating from his own flesh and blood as it created a powerful energy to counter-attack.

“Die, die, DIE!!” Bai Xiaochun roared as he punched out again and again. The power of his Undying Skin, Undying Heavenly King, and Undying Tendons all merged together, making a black glow that spread out from his fist to cover the huge giant!

The 300-meter-tall giant began to tremble, and then let out an agonized howl as his right leg collapsed into a mass of blood, ripped flesh and shattered bone. Then, the black light continued to spread out, doing the same thing to the giant's other leg, his torso, his arms, and finally his head. In the blink of an eye, his entire body was reduced to a mass of gore!!

Blood splashed down like rain in all directions as the giant was destroyed in body and soul, leaving Bai Xiaochun standing there completely alone.

Silence spread out as the surrounding giants stared in shock at what had just occurred. Their minds felt as if they were being struck by countless bolts of lightning.

“King is dead?”

“How could this be happening? King! He was King! The boundlessly powerful King was actually killed by Devil Bai's fist strike!?”

“How is this possible!? Heavens! Is Devil Bai a warrior of the Holy

People, or are we?!?! That fleshly body power, it... it....” All of the savages were shaking in terror of Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun had clearly proven that his power came, not from his defenses, but from his fleshly body. Not even the boundlessly powerful King had been a match for him!

As the rain of blood spattered down onto the surrounding savages, their hearts drained of the desire to do battle. At the same time, that figure standing in the middle of all the falling blood became like a thing of nightmares.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't affected at all by the corrosive rain of blood as he looked around coldly at the rest of the giants in the area.

“Who else wants to die!?”

Not a single giant responded. Instead, they just stood there, panting, their expressions those of terror.

“Who else wants to die?!?!?” Bai Xiaochun repeated, his murderous aura raging. Then he took a step forward, only to find that the ashen-faced giants stepped backward in response.

“You want to kill Bai Xiaochun? Well let me ask you. Who else wants to die?!?!?!?” The thunderous roar of Bai Xiaochun’s voice spread out across almost half of the battlefield, reaching the ears of many of the other savage giants as they fought with the cultivators of the five legions.

As for the cultivators who heard, they trembled and looked in the direction the voice came from. Some of them had strange expressions on their faces, but most of them gritted their teeth and began to head in his direction.

Before long, more and more of the scattered five legions cultivators began to close in on Bai Xiaochun. They were wounded and bedraggled, and yet none of the giants dared to block their paths. Before long, a group of hundreds had gathered around Bai Xiaochun.

When they saw him, and the mountains of corpses that surrounded him, their hearts were filled with complete and utter shock.

“Our respects, Grandmaster Bai!!”

“Our respects, Grandmaster Bai!!”

As their stunned cries rang out across the battlefield, it became clear that all of these cultivators now viewed Bai Xiaochun as their figurehead.

Chapter 499: Frigid Domain!

When Bai Xiaochun saw all of the cultivators gathering in his area, and how the suddenly cowardly giants were doing nothing to stop them, his heart quivered with an anxious feeling.

For some reason, the current situation seemed like a great opportunity....

“The larger the group, the stronger we are....” he thought. The expression on his face remained as cold as ever, and his energy continued to surge as he waved his hand and called out in a hoarse voice.

“Let’s go! I’m taking you back to the Great Wall!”

As his words entered the ears of the surrounding cultivators, they began to tremble.

In their moment of helplessness, surrounded by savages and faced with the prospect of almost certain death, what they wished for more than anything was to get back to the Great Wall. Of course, all of them knew that doing such a thing on their own was virtually impossible.

That was especially true when they saw so many of their comrades falling in battle. To be in a situation like that, only to have someone offer to lead them back to the Great Wall, someone who the giants were terrified of and who seemed actually capable of following through on his words... led to a sensation they would never ever forget. The gratitude which rose up within them was intense to an indescribable degree!

Who else wants to die!?!? The words so recently uttered by Bai Xiaochun were still echoing in their hearts, which were now pulsing, not with anxiety, but with anticipation. Without any hesitation, they began to form up protectively around Bai Xiaochun, their eyes shining with hope and the desire to live.

“Let's go!” Bai Xiaochun said. “We kill anybody who tries to get in our way! Join our voices together so that more cultivators can join us on our way back! Even if we don't make it all the way back, we'll make sure that everyone in this part of the world remembers our battle cry for the rest of their lives!”

Bai Xiaochun's voice was like the last bit of hope in the world, and it caused the surrounding hundreds of cultivators' eyes to shine bright red.

After Bai Xiaochun was satisfied that the cultivators were sufficiently worked up, he waved his arm, gritted his teeth, he stepped forward to lead the formation, which was the best way to control the power of the group. And then, even as he and the rest of the cultivators hovered right within the jaws of death, he shouted out at the top of his lungs and burst into motion toward the distant spell formation shield!

“Advance!”

The rest of the cultivators also began to shout out.

“Advance!!”

“Advance!!!”

Hundreds of them clustered around Bai Xiaochun, adding their power to the formation as they shot like a deadly spear across the battlefield.

As they moved along, the savage giants immediately backed up, convinced that if they didn't, they would die. That feeling was especially bolstered by the savagery Bai Xiaochun had just put on display.

All of them knew that if they simply fell upon him with wave upon wave... they would eventually overwhelm him with numbers.

And yet... not a single one blocked his path. The hundreds of cultivators shot across the battlefield with Bai Xiaochun in the

lead, who relied only on his fleshly body power, and didn't draw upon a single magical technique.

Of course, there was a reason for that. In his opinion, there were obviously a lot of people who were aiming to kill him, and thus, he needed to keep his spiritual power in reserve as a trump card. Thankfully, his Undying Live Forever Technique came with shocking restorative powers, and as such, he was able to lead the cultivators forward without any resistance!

They crushed anything in their path like a hammer crushing an ice cube. As for the cultivators he led, they had grasped onto that last bit of hope, and were willing to give their all to make sure that no one even got close enough to take it away.

As they barreled forward, their voices rang out for everyone to hear.

“Who else wants to die!?!?”

“Fellow Daoists of the five legions, join us and get back home!!” More and more cultivators who were locked in deadly combat on the battlefield did everything they could to join the group, which was now growing larger and larger. Soon, it didn't number in the hundreds, but rather, the thousands.

As a result, their momentum picked up, and they became even harder to resist!

They were now a major focus on the battlefield, to the point where the cultivators who had managed to stay in place on the Great Wall could see them. Even Chen Hetian caught a glimpse of them, and was instantly moved.

“Unleash all the power of the eye!” he bellowed. “Focus the spell formation shield to extract Bai Xiaochun!” In response to his words, numerous beams of light shot out from the enormous eye, screaming through the air to clear a path for Bai Xiaochun.

As for the spell formation shield, it trembled as a small section

bulged out and began to spread across the battlefield toward the group he was leading.

By this point, more and more tribal chiefs were paying attention to what was happening.

Finally, the red-garbed young woman fighting Chen Hetian suddenly shouted, “Kill him!”

Chen Hetian roared in anger and attacked with full force, but other than that, could do nothing but watch as the thousands of soul cultivators who were standing guard over the necromancers suddenly turned their heads in Bai Xiaochun’s direction.

A large number of them then rose to their feet, becoming beams of light that shot toward Bai Xiaochun and the cultivators he led. They moved with incredible speed, and despite the fact that they were made up of all sorts of handsome men and beautiful women, from the mysterious light that shone in their eyes, it was obvious that they possessed powerful soul magic.

Bai Xiaochun had heard Chen Hetian’s words earlier, and saw both the beams of light shooting out from the enormous eye and the spell formation reaching out to meet him. Even as excitement rose up in his heart, the red-garbed young woman called out her orders, and whistling sounds filled the air as numerous soul cultivators shot in his direction.

“Complete and utter bullies!!” he thought, his anxiety mounting. Just when the chance to escape was right in front of him, these people were rushing to block his path, and as a result, his anger began to burn.

“Brothers, cut down those soul cultivators. With them out of the way, we can return to the Great Wall!” The surrounding thousands of cultivators could see exactly what Bai Xiaochun meant, and all began to shout out battle cries.

Unfortunately, the soul cultivators didn’t come alone. By

utilizing some unknown technique, they forced the retreating giants' eyes to suddenly turn blank, as if they had suddenly lost their ability to think. Then the giants roared and joined the charge. It was the same with the various battle beasts.

Thankfully, not all of the giants were affected, only some of them. Even still, the group that did join in the attack was not small compared to Bai Xiaochun and the cultivators he led.

In the blink of an eye, the soul cultivators were on them, some of them focusing on Bai Xiaochun, and others attacking the men with him. Almost immediately, the troop formation began to fall apart.

A middle-aged soul cultivator suddenly faded into being right in front of Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shining with cold light as his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture. Instantly, green strands of flame sprang into being in his palm, which shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Behind him were seven additional soul cultivators, none of them slower than him. Apparently, all the first soul cultivator planned to do was slow Bai Xiaochun down to give his fellows time to finish him off.

Further off in the distance were even more soul cultivators, dozens of them, spreading out to try to cut down all possible paths of escape for Bai Xiaochun.

“Wanna kill me?!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, his eyes flickering with madness. Instead of trying to dodge out of the way of the expressionless middle-aged soul cultivator, Bai Xiaochun charged forward, seemingly oblivious to his own life or death. He slammed into the man, instantly causing blood to ooze out of his own mouth, but then didn't hesitate to unleash the Mountain Shaking Bash. Instantly, the man was shoved backward with deadly force into the group of seven incoming soul cultivators.

This sudden development caused the seven soul cultivators' eyes to flicker. Without any hesitation, they shoved their hands out,

sending seven illusory soul dragons roaring toward Bai Xiaochun as if to consume him.

“Just what I've been waiting for!” Bai Xiaochun roared. Instantly, blue light appeared in his pupils, and before anything else could happen, heaven-shaking, earth-shattering frigid qi erupted out!

Frigid School Will Evolving Incantation!

Although the frigid qi was not quite at the Frigid Paragon level, it was very close!

The frigid qi instantly spread for thousands of meters, causing all savages and soul cultivators within that area to begin to tremble as they iced over. The giants were especially affected.

As for the soul cultivators, their expression flickered; this turn of events completely surpassed their power of prediction. Especially shocked were the soul cultivators closest to Bai Xiaochun, who were stunned to find that their cultivation bases were freezing up.

In the blink of an eye, an area thousands of meters across had become like the dead of winter. Icy coldness filled the area, as well as astonishing frigid qi. Everything was frozen over to the point where... blue snowflakes appeared and began to fall.

Although Bai was trembling with fear and anxiety, he was also grittily fierce as he said, “Time to do some killing!”

He had no desire to die, and therefore, the only option now... was to kill the enemy!

This was a frigid domain!

This was... Bai Xiaochun's world!

Chapter 500: Battle Prowess That Shocks The Masses!

Within the frigid domain, giants and soul cultivators alike trembled in fear as their cultivation bases were seemingly frozen solid!

Not a single person under Nascent Soul could escape its effects!

Even people in the great circle of Core Formation, or quasi-Nascent Soul experts were by no means exempt! The shocked giants and soul cultivators' first instinct was to flee.

However, thanks to the frigid qi locking them down, they were incapable of doing so. Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, and with the wave of his hand caused the middle-aged soul cultivator in front of him to explode to bits. The other seven soul cultivators were howling in rage, and yet couldn't do anything to fight back.

Moments later, booms filled the air as the seven Core Formation soul cultivators exploded to bits, sending frozen chunks of blood and gore out in all directions.

"This is my world!" Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes shining with fierce light as he waved his finger down at the ground, causing the frigid qi to surge out again!

This time, it didn't spread out for thousands of meters, but rather, for 30,000!!

The 30,000-meter frigid domain was a tool of the Frigid Master!

Within that area, everything was frozen solid and couldn't stand up to Bai Xiaochun any more than dried twigs and limp weeds. Each and every attack he unleashed cut down another Core Formation soul cultivator, one after another!

Everything was happening too quickly; nothing could prevent the slaughter from being carried out!

A savage giant shivered, and then his head exploded, sending frozen chunks of flesh out in all directions. Bai Xiaochun burst through him, hand flashing in an incantation gesture that caused a dozen nearby soul cultivators to explode to bits!

However, there were so many savages and soul cultivators that even with the help of his Frigid Master powers, Bai Xiaochun couldn't wipe them all out in a short period of time. As the moments ticked by, the terrified and despairing soul cultivators looked around with flickering eyes, hoping to find some way of extricating themselves. Soon, some of them began to twitch and move.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he snorted coldly, performed a double-handed incantation gesture, and then stretched his arms out wide.

“Domain projections!”

Instantly, what appeared to be a dozen human-sized mirrors appeared in the area, from within which stepped a dozen shadowy figures. Shockingly, all of those figures looked exactly like Bai Xiaochun!

These clone-like entities were frigid domain clones who immediately began to slaughter the enemies around them.

Giant after giant, soul cultivator after soul cultivator, one by one they were destroyed in body and soul. Even those who were regaining their ability to move couldn't do so quickly enough, and died screaming.

Booms rose up as the entire frigid domain became like a terrifying hell!

Unfortunately, to use divine abilities and magical techniques in this way would quickly drain one's cultivation base. Were Bai Xiaochun back in the lands of Heavenspan, it would have been easier to use and easier to recover from. But he was in the

Wildlands, where there was no spiritual energy of heaven and earth. Whatever spiritual power he lost was lost for good, and therefore, he was being drained of energy at a rapid pace.

As such, Bai Xiaochun could only keep up the current action for the space of a dozen breaths of time or so. After that, his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and the freezing domain around him began to melt and fade away.

As that happened, screams began to ring out; some of the soul cultivators and savage giants had been smashed to pieces, but because they were frozen in place, hadn't been immediately killed.

But now, blood and gore filled the 30,000-meter area, and the ground was littered with the corpses of hundreds of giants and roughly seventy or eighty soul cultivators!

The other soul cultivators and giants who hadn't entered the freezing area earlier were now left gasping in horror and disbelief at Bai Xiaochun.

“H-how... how is this possible?!?”

“How could he be so strong? He's not a Core Formation cultivator; that was obviously the power of the Nascent Soul stage!!”

“He slaughtered those Core Formation experts as easily as if he were stomping on ants!!”

Not only were the giants and soul cultivators shocked, but the cultivators of the five legions who had remained within the freezing area but weren't affected by the coldness were also dumbfounded.

As they looked around, panting, their eyes began to shine with passion, and for many, worship!

In an era where the law of the jungle prevailed, powerful experts always gained respect. That was even more true in the cultivation world than the mortal world. As of this moment, the way that Bai

Xiaochun had dominated the battlefield ensured that a deep impression would be left on the hearts of all present!

“Come with me,” Bai Xiaochun said loudly. “We’re going back to the Great Wall!” Bai Xiaochun’s breath was coming in ragged gasps, and exhaustion gripped him tight. He had already drained much of his cultivation base. However, he still threw his head back and roared as he led the cultivators of the five legions charging across the battlefield once again.

The way the cultivators clustered around him protectively caused him to sigh in relief; despite the carnage he had just unleashed, he was jumpier than ever. Only he could truly be aware of how nervous he was at the moment.

However, he didn’t think it was appropriate to let anyone know how afraid he was, which was a skill he had long since mastered. As he sped along, he pulled out a bottle of spirit alcohol and guzzled it down, sparing some to give to a few of the surrounding cultivators.

At the same time, he surreptitiously pulled out a Godly Vestige Pill and tucked it into his palm in case he needed it later.

His Godly Vestige Pills were his trump cards. One such pill could completely heal any injuries in the blink of an eye. Although it wouldn’t restore his spiritual power, he did have plenty more spirit alcohol in his bag of holding.

Everyone in the group around him was getting excited as they charged viciously toward the shield. At the moment, the savages and soul cultivators were powerless to stop them, and by now, they were only about 3,000 meters away from the shield. However, there were also hundreds of soul cultivators speeding in their direction.

Further off in the distance were numerous tribal chiefs who radiated shocking auras. Clearly, they had the battle prowess of the Nascent Soul stage, and yet, under the command of Chen Hetian,

the enormous eye within Great Wall City continued to send destructive beams of light out to prevent them from getting closer!

Unfortunately, there were too many Core Formation soul cultivators for the enormous eye to do anything about them. As they closed in, they unleashed wave after wave of soul power which forced the giants to join their attack.

The giants' eyes would turn blank, and then they would howl as they lurched forward and self-detonated as soon as they got close enough!

From the look of things, the giants and soul cultivators were going to throw everything at their disposal toward Bai Xiaochun to prevent him from escaping!

The power of the detonations rippled out, and corrosive blood splashed everywhere. Many of the group of thousands of cultivators were injured, and tumbled backward as a result. At the moment, it seemed like the troop formation they had created would fall apart at any moment.

Anxiety mounting, Bai Xiaochun guzzled down another mouthful of spirit alcohol, then burst into motion, unleashing more frigid qi.

However, as the frigid qi spread out, the soul cultivators' eyes flickered, and all of them quickly responded by sending out clouds of black mist. Within those mists were soul shadows that screamed through the air toward Bai Xiaochun, fighting back against the frigid qi and simultaneously providing the soul cultivators with a measure of protection.

Theoretically speaking, all Bai Xiaochun had to do was unleash slightly stronger frigid qi, or keep the current frigid qi roiling out for a bit longer. If he did, then his opponents wouldn't be able to do anything against him, at least not for the following ten breaths of time.

After all, the soul cultivators from earlier had been powerless to

resist, and the current batch were only just able to fight back on a small scale!

However, Bai Xiaochun could do neither of those things. Not even relying on spirit alcohol could negate the fact that there was no spiritual energy in the Wildlands.

There was only one thing that Bai Xiaochun could do, and that was rely on his veins of steel to go all out to fight the soul cultivators, even if he got injured in the process!

And that was exactly what he did. He quickly closed in on the nearest soul cultivator, ignoring the divine ability being unleashed against him. Grabbing his opponent's arm, he unleashed the Mountain Shaking Bash, crushing him to pieces!

Things weren't over yet, of course. He took another step forward, placing him right in front of a soul cultivator who had just summoned a pitch-black soul sword. Allowing the sword to bite into his shoulder, he grabbed the man's neck with his left hand, then crushed his fingers down viciously.

Without pausing for a moment, he continued forward, using Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning as well as a host of wind blades to destroy everything in his path!

Chapter 501: Trying To Defeat A Nascent Soul Expert!

Bai Xiaochun seemed like he had already descended into madness. He had received numerous injuries, and his eyes were completely bloodshot. Behind him, the ground was littered with corpses, and the soul cultivators ahead of him were completely shaken.

To them, Bai Xiaochun seemed insane and completely bereft of the desire to live. Despite having killed quite a number of soul cultivators, he was clearly seriously injured.

However, he didn't seem to care about any such injuries as he strode forward, shouting, "Die!!"

Suddenly, an old soul cultivator appeared in front of him, reaching out with a hand that was already decaying into blackness. By the time his hand was extended, it looked like nothing but ashen bones as he tried to grab Bai Xiaochun's chest, apparently to rip out his heart.

At the same time, eight other soul cultivators in the area drew so deeply upon themselves that blood began to ooze out of their eyes, ears, noses, and mouths. Soul power battered Bai Xiaochun's frigid qi as they charged in attack; if they could just slow down his momentum, then perhaps their combined force would be enough to destroy him in body and soul.

In the face of such danger, Bai Xiaochun laughed viciously and allowed the old man's pitch-black bone hand to slam into his chest. The old man's eyes lit up with delight, and just when he was about to grab down, his face fell as he realized that it felt like his hand had run into a chunk of iron. Heart pounding, the old man made to retreat.

However, that was when Bai Xiaochun lunged forward,

headbutting the man in the face. As the man's head was crushed, he screamed and tried to fight back, and yet, the frigid qi had suppressed even his quasi-Nascent Soul cultivation base, and a moment later, he was dead in body and soul.

After killing the old man, Bai Xiaochun spun, his hands flashing in a double-handed incantation gesture to summon a gale-force wind that blasted against the other eight soul cultivators

Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and yet he shot like lightning toward the eight enemies, landing vicious fist strikes onto their chests that sent them tumbling backward like kites with their strings cut.

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually occurred within about ten breaths of time. During that time, he had already killed at least a hundred soul cultivators, and many savage giants. Behind him, the ground was soaked with blood and gore.

As his frigid qi faded away, he staggered a bit to the side, where some of the cultivators of the five legions reached out to prop him up. Those cultivators' eyes were bright red; after witnessing Bai Xiaochun's brave ferocity, they were also pushed deeper into madness, and took it upon themselves to protect him as they again charged forward.

Bai Xiaochun's face was pale white, and he was having a hard time breathing. However, with the help of the other cultivators, he managed to grit his teeth and put a Godly Vestige Pill into his mouth. Then he pulled out a few bottles of spirit alcohol to restore his spiritual energy.

The main reason he had been willing to sustain such injuries moments ago was because he had the Godly Vestige Pill to fall back on. As soon as the miraculous pill entered his mouth, heat washed through him, and in the blink of an eye, all of his injuries were being healed.

Meanwhile, the cultivators continued to charge toward the

shield, which was now only about 1,500 meters away. Along the way, other nearby cultivators had noticed what was happening, and had been hurrying over to join them the entire time, causing their numbers to swell to over 10,000.

Of course, they weren't the only large group of cultivators who had managed to group together. There were seven or eight other such groups, all of whom were in formation and trying to reach the shield. Furthermore, all of them were rallying around a powerful figure of some sort.

And of course, Bai Xiaochun was just such a leader!

However, he was a bit different from the other core figures who had rallied troops around them. Those people had long since grown in prestige and power. In contrast, Bai Xiaochun had slaughtered his way into fame in a very short time!

He seemed to lack any fear of death, and was willing to fight back against hundreds of soul cultivators and savage giants. Because of that, he had gained the complete approval of everyone around him.

As his group blasted through layer after layer of opposition, and got closer and closer to the shield, one of the Nascent Soul tribal chiefs finally used some unknown method to make it past the destructive beams of light being sent out by the huge eye.

At first, the tribal chief was only about 30 meters tall, but as he closed in, he rapidly grew in height to 300 meters tall. Every step he took caused his energy to rise to even more shocking heights, even causing a powerful wind to sweep about in all directions.

As he sped toward Bai Xiaochun, cries of alarm rang out from the cultivators.

"Time to die, Devil Bai!" he howled in rage, his voice echoing like thunder. The mere sound of his voice was such that the cultivators who had been clustered protectively around Bai Xiaochun began to

tremble and cough up blood.

With that, the tribal chief lunged forward, shoving his mountain-like hand forward and unleashing pressure that the cultivators of the five legions could not fight back against. From the look of it, there was nothing anybody could do to stop this chief.

Even as Bai Xiaochun stood there, supported by another cultivator, he looked up, and his pupils constricted.

“Nascent Soul....”

There was no time for hesitation. He had already surmised that the Wildlanders wouldn't let him escape so easily, which was why he had held back so many of his other trump cards.

Although the scene which was playing out was shocking, it was by no means unexpected. Gritting his teeth, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then dashed forward to meet the tribal chief, frigid qi swirling around him, his Undying Live Forever Technique on full display.

In the blink of an eye, the two of them met, and an intense boom filled the air. Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth, and he almost felt like the pressure and might of the Nascent Soul stage alone was enough to crush him into oblivion!

However, the tribal chief didn't come out unscathed. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and his eyes shone with incredulity as he staggered backward several steps.

“What level is your cultivation base?! You're not injured?!?!” In his shock, the tribal chief asked two questions in one breath. From what he had been able to tell, this Devil Bai was actually on equal footing with himself, which seemed like a complete impossibility.

Bai Xiaochun wiped the blood off of his mouth and said, “My cultivation base level? The level that can kill you!”

A quick glance confirmed that the beams of light from the giant eye would definitely keep the other tribal chiefs at bay

temporarily. However, if he didn't take care of this tribal chief quickly, then death would be just around the corner.

Eyes flickering, he decided to completely throw caution to the wind. Quickly performing a double-handed incantation gesture, he shoved his hands down toward the ground!

“Waterswamp!!”

Instantly, ripples spread out through the air, causing water vapor to spring out of nowhere as the entire area was transformed into a huge swamp!

When that swamp appeared, the tribal chief's face fell, and the profound sense of deadly crisis that inundated him caused his heart to begin to pound.

“This Devil Bai is very strange....” The chief's eyes flickered with killing intent; well aware that he couldn't let Bai Xiaochun finish using this technique, he suddenly lunged forward.

“You're dead!”

“Nope,” Bai Xiaochun retorted. “You're dead!” With that, he flung his hands over his head, causing his hair and his blood-stained garments to whip about as energy surged in all directions.

“.... Kingdom!!”

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The lands quaked as a massive spike shot out from the ground, then a second, and then a third! One after another, they rose up like mountains, provoking looks of wide-eyed shock from everyone on the battlefield.

The tribal chief had been in the middle of lunging forward, and was stabbed directly by one of the spikes. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and a look of utter shock appeared on his face.

Frigid qi poured into him as he looked down at the spike, and the swamp around him. From what he could tell, that water vapor hid

some shockingly enormous beast!

And yet, things weren't over yet. Bai Xiaochun leaped into the air above the tribal chief, spreading his arms wide as he howled, "Living Mountain Incantation!"

In the blink of an eye, rocks began to form around him until he looked like a huge stone golem!

With the power of a living mountain, he bore down on the tribal chief and then crushed him with vicious ruthlessness!

"Elder Brother Zhao can kill Nascent Soul experts, and so can Bai Xiaochun!"

Chapter 502: How Is This Possible!

Below the tribal chief was the Waterswamp Kingdom. He was surrounded by frigid qi, and was looking up at Bai Xiaochun's living mountain power. The combination of all of those factors created a deadly gambit that was Bai Xiaochun's last hope for survival. These were his most powerful trump cards!

Early on, he had assumed that he would face a moment of ultimate danger such as this, and as such, he had been holding back a bit of fleshly body power, and even some of his spiritual power, all for a moment like this!

Furthermore, because of his Godly Vestige Pills, he was much more confident of being able to survive. Therefore, he also knew that he had to go all out!

Although he feared death, in a moment like this when the flame of his life force could be snuffed out at any moment, such fear was useless. If he wanted to keep himself from dying, he had to risk his life!!

Throw caution to the wind!

That was his line of thinking. As he descended, the maddened tribal chief also drew upon every ounce of power he could to fight back against this unprecedentedly deadly crisis. The most unbelievable aspect to the entire situation was that he was a Nascent Soul expert. Although he was only in the early Nascent Soul stage, that still counted as Nascent Soul!

And it didn't matter how strong Bai Xiaochun was, the chief could sense that he was only in the late Core Formation stage, not even the great circle!

Despite that, despite the fact that this was a late Core Formation cultivator, he imparted such a sensation of imminent danger that the chief couldn't help but feel both humiliated and terrified.

However, there was no time for thought or planning, nor any time for discussion. The tribal chief's cultivation base power erupted out, bolstering his fleshly body to the point where he looked like a heavenly king!

The savage giants were different from soul cultivators in that they focused mostly on fleshly body cultivation. Although this tribal chief had some magical techniques at his disposal, the true foundation of his power was fleshly body strength.

“Wanna kill me?!?!” the chief roared, throwing both his hands above him to smash into the Living Mountain Incantation.

“None other!” Bai Xiaochun roared back, unleashing everything that his Living Mountain Incantation, Waterswamp Kingdom, and Frigid Master powers were capable of.

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

Wind blasted out in all directions, and brightly colored light flashed in heaven and earth. The entire battlefield trembled, and cultivators from both sides of the conflict all simultaneously stared in the same direction to see what would happen.

The eyes of the other tribal chiefs were glued to the scene, and at the same time, their minds were battered with waves of shock. Even the necromancers and the top experts from the five legions were all looking over at Bai Xiaochun!

He was the complete and utter center of attention!

As everyone looked on, a heaven-rending, earth-crushing boom ripped through the air. Then, a moment later, the Frigid Master aura began to fade, and the Waterswamp Kingdom spikes began to vanish.

Up above in the air, Bai Xiaochun was trembling and coughing up blood as he tumbled backward. Cracking sounds rang out as his living mountain form cracked and crumbled. Soon, his true form was revealed, and after coughing up another mouthful of blood, he

popped another Godly Vestige Pill into his mouth!

When he looked up, he didn't even take the time to see the outcome of his attack, but instead, bolted toward the shield.

At the same time, the fading effects of the Living Mountain Incantation, Waterswamp Kingdom, and Frigid Master aura slowly revealed the Nascent Soul tribal chief.

At first, he stood there completely unmoving, but then a breeze swept passed, and he trembled. Then the chief slowly crumbled and transformed into ash, starting from his feet and head, and slowly spreading to the rest of his body!

He had been completely destroyed, from his physical form down to his soul!!

In the moment of his death, his eyes continued to shine with terror and defiance. And yet, nothing could stop him from fading away into the wind....

The battlefield went silent for a long moment before panting sounds began to rise up, and then a huge commotion.

“Impossible!!”

“Heavens! A late Core Formation cultivator just killed a Nascent Soul expert!!”

“This... this.... He wasn't an ordinary Nascent Soul expert either, he was a tribal chief from one of the Wildlands tribes! His fleshly body power must have been shocking!!”

“This Devil Bai.... Dammit, not only did he come out alive, but he actually ended his opponent! What brilliance!!”

Even as the exclamations of astonishment rang out, the more than 10,000 cultivators in the area began to cry out in joy and cluster around Bai Xiaochun as they all shot toward the shield.

The other giants and soul cultivators in the area were completely shaken. As Bai Xiaochun barreled toward them, their faces turned

ashen with fear, and they scattered, not daring to provide even the slightest bit of resistance!

Bai Xiaochun had put far too many giants and soul cultivators to death. He had even killed one of the tribal chiefs. How could any of them even think of trying to stand in his way!?

The enormous eye began to send beams of light out with even more rapidity, making it impossible for any other tribal chief to get closer. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's own battalion was also speeding in his direction. They had been trying to reach him the entire time, intent on joining and guarding him.

After all, Bai Xiaochun had always treated them well, plus, his current achievements in battle ensured that he would almost certainly be promoted in the army. How could they possibly be anything but awe-inspired?

As for the spell formation shield, it continued to bulge out toward him, to the point where all of the savages and soul cultivators, and even the tribal chiefs could see... that he would be within that shield in moments!

In the moment he did, a tremor ran through him, and all of the valor and bravery from moments before vanished, to be replaced by lingering fear. His face was ashen, and he was panting as he turned back to look at the countless savages gnashing their teeth beyond the shield.

“You just wait for Lord Bai to come back and show you a thing or two!”

Inside of the shield, Bai Lin and the other top experts were still fighting the necromancer souls. Unsightly expressions could be seen on the faces of the necromancers, many of whom had received grievous injuries. As soon as Bai Xiaochun made it back inside the shield, the necromancer souls exchanged glances and made as if to charge in his direction.

And yet, how could Bai Lin and the other top experts let that happen? Without the slightest hesitation, all of the major generals, as well as other Nascent Soul experts from the five legions, leapt forward to fight them. Moments later, the necromancer souls scattered, not in an attempt to get at Bai Xiaochun, but to flee back outside of the shield.

They all headed in different directions, and although some of them were close enough to Bai Xiaochun that they might have been able to send a casual attack in his direction, considering how many cultivators surrounded him, and considering how he had fought the tribal chief, they were so frightened that they just left.

Bai Xiaochun maintained full vigilance as all of this happened. Soon, the necromancers were gone, and he finally breathed a sigh of relief. Surrounded by all the cultivators he had led off of the battlefield, he began to speed back toward the Great Wall.

When he finally reached the wall itself, he finally seemed to run out of energy. Heart pounding, he thought back to everything which had occurred during the fight, and was left with the sensation that he had barely escaped with his life.

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Eventually, as evening gave way to night, Chen Hetian and the red-garbed young woman finally stopped fighting. The day of battle had finally come to an end, and the only thing left behind on the battlefield were mounds of corpses.

The Wildlands had suffered grievous casualties, and yet, so had the five legions. After a night of rest, the fighting resumed in the morning, just as fierce as before.

Three months passed, during which time the fighting raged. At the same time, the savage giants' army continued to receive reinforcements, and it was the same with the five legions. Cultivators from World City were continually being sent to bolster the forces at the Great Wall, and ensure that their overall strength

didn't lessen.

During the three months, one name after another rose to prominence within the five legions, all thanks to the battle credit they had accumulated. Of course, Bai Xiaochun was the most spectacular of them all.

Although he never went back to the front lines during the three months which had passed, his bravery and veins of steel during the initial battle caused the more than 10,000 cultivators who he had led to safety to view him with reverence and awe.

Furthermore, his battle credit continued to rise, although no one in the five legions could determine the exact extent of it!

Meanwhile, a similar situation occurred among the Wildlands forces. Because of the fierce fighting, one powerful expert after another rose to fame, the vast majority of them being... necromancers!

A month before, as the battles seemed to be winding down, the necromancers seemed to abandon the tactic of using souls as their weapons, and instead began to fight personally on the battlefield. When they did, the attacks they unleashed shocked everyone present.

That was because the magical items they wielded, despite not being at the level of precious treasures, were all decorated with a minimum of seven spirit enhancement designs!

There were even some of them that had received tenfold spirit enhancements!!

Most shocking of all were three particular necromancers who were in the late Nascent Soul stage. Their magical items unleashed shocking power that not only enabled them to easily kill other Nascent Soul cultivators, but also allowed them to challenge quasi-Deva Realm experts like Bai Lin.

Each of those three Necromancers wielded magical items with

thirteen silver designs on them. Shockingly, they were magical items with thirteenfold spirit enhancements!

Many of the cultivators from the legions were shocked by this, especially Bai Xiaochun. In fact, it was so unbelievable to him that he personally went up to the wall to see for himself.

“How is this possible?!?!”

Chapter 503: Promotion To Colonel!

Bai Xiaochun almost couldn't believe what he was seeing. In the lands of Heavenspan, the most advanced spirit enhancement he had ever seen was tenfold.

But now, in a completely unexpected turn of events, he was looking at magical items which had been enhanced far beyond that.

"There's something strange going on. Could it be... that the Wildlands harbors some mysterious secret regarding spirit enhancement?!" Even as he pondered the issue, he subconsciously cast his senses toward the turtle-wok inside his finger.

Most telling of all about the whole thing was that Bai Lin and the other most powerful experts didn't seem to find the matter unusual at all. It was almost as if they were used to seeing necromancers using such spirit enhanced magical items. Furthermore, their eyes burned passionately at the sight of them, and they attacked with greater fervor than before, clearly in the hopes of getting their hands on one of the enhanced treasures.

Apparently, for the generals and major generals, one of the key things they could gain from battle wasn't battle credit, but rather, the spirit enhanced treasures of the necromancers.

The fighting went on for another month, after which the Wildlands finally retreated.... The Great Wall forces didn't chase after them.

After all, the Great Wall had suffered extensive losses in this battle as well.

Neither Chen Hetian nor the red-garbed young woman came out on top in their conflict, and in fact, both received similar injuries. It was only in the moment that the Wildlands armies began to retreat that Bai Xiaochun finally got a good look at the young

woman in red.

She wore a long red garment and had flowing black hair. She seemed very young, and was beautiful in a way that surpassed even Chen Manyao.

Of greater significance, however, was her cultivation base, which made her radiate an air of nobility that would cause anyone who looked at her to feel their heart pounding in their chest.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun didn't really care about any of that. At the moment, he was looking glumly at Li Hongming, who had come to the Armory to visit Bai Xiaochun the very afternoon the fighting ended. Li Hongming had been a colonel to begin with, and still was, but had risen within the ranks of the colonels thanks to his accumulation of battle credit during the fighting.

“Xiaochun, you're famous now! Completely famous!! According to the secret reports I saw, the Wildlands has increased the bounty on your head. Do you know what the reward is for your death?

“A deva beast soul!! Although the reward is only one of them, and it's not clear what type, that's still something incredibly valuable. After all, if you can collect enough five elements deva beast souls to meet the requirements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, you can step into the Nascent Soul stage!!

“Only people in the top 10 of the Wildlands Execution List have rewards like that attached to their names. Congratulations! Xiaochun... you're already in the top 10!

“The only people even close to you on that list are Nascent Soul cultivators. In fact, you are the only Core Formation cultivator in the top 30!

“Devil Bai. That's what the Wildlanders call you now!!” Li Hongming was sincerely offering his congratulations to Bai Xiaochun, and had actually hurried over here just to tell him this news. However, Bai Xiaochun was left shaking in fear.

“A deva beast soul as a reward....” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but gasp in shock as his heart began to pound. He could only imagine how badly the savages and soul cultivators in the Wildlands would want to kill him now.

Li Hongming was left sighing continuously in his heart. When he thought back to the time Bai Xiaochun had first arrived, it would have been impossible to predict that he would become so famous both inside and outside the Great Wall.

The two of them chatted a bit more about some random things, until eventually Li Hongming could sense that Bai Xiaochun was feeling down. Finally, he patted his shoulder and left.

Afterward, Bai Xiaochun sat down and sighed.

“Ah, whatever. No matter where I go, I always put on a breathtaking performance. Ai.... Worst case scenario, I just don’t go outside the Great Wall after this. I’ll stick around until the ten years are up, and then head back to the sect.” Only by comforting himself in this way could he somewhat still his pounding heart.

And yet, his anxiety just wouldn’t go away. Not only was he worried about the Wildlands soul cultivators trying to get the bounty on his head, but he also couldn’t keep from being nervous about the other cultivators in the five legions. After all, his head was very valuable now....

Thankfully, he didn’t have to stew in his worries for too long. Now that the fighting was over, the promotions were being handed out. Many cultivators were being promoted from ordinary soldiers to the rank of lieutenant or captain.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was one of only two captains who were promoted to colonel!

Now that he was a colonel, he could occupy both the Armory and his own personal colonel’s command center. Furthermore, in addition to Zhao Long and the original battalion of 100 men... he

would now command an additional 900 cultivators!

It took a huge amount of battle credit to earn a promotion from captain to colonel, which made such promotions very uncommon as a result of only one battle.

The other captain to receive a promotion to colonel had already been stationed in Great Wall City for a hundred years. The only reason he had finally been able to get his promotion was because he was about to break through into the great circle of Core Formation, and had risked his life in countless battles.

The truth was that despite how many soul cultivators Bai Xiaochun had cut down, and regardless of the fact that he had slaughtered a tribal chief, he still shouldn't have had enough battle credit to get promoted. The only reason he was now a colonel was because of his Soul Convergence Pills and pill furnace bombs!

In that fashion, he had advanced by leaps and bounds, and been promoted to colonel in one fell swoop!

As an apothecary, he had invented Soul Convergence Pills, which ended up changing the course of the battle. Furthermore, his exploding treasures also shocked everyone near and far. And then there was his battle prowess. After cutting down numerous soul cultivators, and even a tribal chief, it was clear that his fleshly body was similar to the Nascent Soul level. And although he wasn't a true Nascent Soul expert, he could obviously do things that ordinary Core Formation cultivators could not!

In addition to all that, he had saved the lives of over 10,000 soldiers, causing countless cultivators to revere him.

To top it all off, he was now in the top 10 on the Wildlands Execution List!

All of these various honors and glories were like a shockwave that rolled through all of Great Wall City. In addition, it caused the generals of the other four legions to suddenly view Bai Xiaochun as

being vastly more important than he had been before.

Whoever had Bai Xiaochun in their legion would not only have a valiant warrior, but would also have Soul Convergence Pills and exploding pill furnaces. Plus, they would have someone who thousands upon thousands of other cultivators revered. He was really a comprehensive package.

The generals of the other four legions were quite excited, and therefore, it was no surprise that on the evening in which Bai Xiaochun was promoted to colonel, a bright beam of light suddenly appeared outside of the Armory.

Within that beam of light was an old man wearing a pitch-black suit of armor. He pulsed with a black energy, and had the illusory image of a fierce tiger floating above his head. His eyes were bright red, and he seemed to pulse with demonic qi. Overall, he made a very terrifying sight.

In addition to all that, he had a very profound cultivation base, being half a step into the Deva Realm. Heaven and earth trembled upon his arrival, and all of the cultivators in the Armory looked up and then clasped hands in salute.

“It's the general of the Black Demons! Greetings, General!”

Zhao Long and his compatriots were shaken, and as for Bai Xiaochun, he had been in the middle of meditating when he felt the sudden pressure in the area. Walking out, he saw the general of the Black Demons hovering in midair.

Bai Xiaochun had never interacted personally with the man; they had only seen each other on the battlefield. Feeling a bit surprised to see him here, Bai Xiaochun clasped hands and bowed.

The old man laughed heartily as he landed in front of Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shining with approval and admiration.

“Grandmaster Bai, why don't you join the Black Demons? Whatever compensation they're giving you here, I'll triple it!”

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped. "Uh...."

He had a lot of freedom in the Skin Flayers, and hadn't planned to leave. However, this general's eyes burned as if with fire; clearly, he really wanted Bai Xiaochun to agree to the proposition. Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, and just when he was about to say something else, another beam of light appeared in the sky. Before anyone could say a word, a new voice rang out.

"Don't listen to him, Grandmaster Bai. Why don't you join the Bane Stars? Not only will I offer you ten times your current compensation, but I can also guarantee that you won't be injured by the Wildlanders even a single time. I definitely won't let you end up in any critical situations such as those which unfolded before!" Even as the words rang out, a middle-aged man in a crimson robe appeared.

He was very attractive, and had a warm smile that lacked even the hint of a bad temper; he was almost humble-looking. However, Bai Xiaochun had seen him fight in battle, and knew that his murderous aura was beyond comparison to anyone except for Bai Lin.

"You'll guarantee my safety?!" Bai Xiaochun blurted, his heart suddenly pounding. He had just been pondering the issue of how dangerous things were, so to hear the general of the Bane Stars make an offer like that instantly got him excited.

When the general of the Black Demons saw Bai Xiaochun's expression, he instantly started to get nervous, and was just about to insert some words when, all of a sudden, a cold snort filled the air.

"The Black Demons and the Bane Stars are all stingy tightwads, Grandmaster Bai. What's the use of joining miserly legions like theirs? If you come to the Savage Butcherers, I'll increase your compensation by twentyfold. I'll also guarantee your safety, and get you any medicinal plant you need. The same goes for spirit

alcohol and medicinal pills. Whatever cultivation resources you require will be at your disposal!” A third beam of light appeared, and as it touched down, a tall, burly man came into view.

Chapter 504: The Five Legions Compete

The burly man wore a suit of heavy armor, and looked almost like a mountain. His eyes flickered with a brutal gleam as he glared at the old man and the middle-aged cultivator.

The generals of the Black Demons and the Bane Stars glared back at him, and it almost looked like a fight might break out at any moment.

“Ummm?” Bai Xiaochun said, blinking a few times. Although he was very pleased by the fact that the generals of these three legions were competing over him, he had to conclude that the offer from the Savage Butcherers seemed the best of them all.

However, it was in that very instant that another cold snort echoed out, along with a blast of wind that caused intense rumbling sounds to fill the air. Then, numerous bolts of lightning descended from the sky, which swirled together into the form of a white-haired cultivator.

In the blink of an eye, he was standing there in Bai Xiaochun’s courtyard, lightning crackling beneath his feet, transforming the entire courtyard into something like a lake of lightning.

Of course, the lightning didn’t harm Bai Xiaochun or his men. However, the faces of the other generals flickered as they were forced to rotate their cultivation bases to keep themselves from harm.

“What do you think you’re doing, Master Soul Slaughterer?!” shouted the burly man from the Savage Butcherers.

“What am I doing? Competing with you people, obviously. Grandmaster Bai, why not join the Soul Slaughterers? I can guarantee you ten years of safety, and fifty times your current compensation. Plus, I can ensure that you will be rich and taken care of after you go back to the sect. I’ll give you access to all the

medicinal plants and other resources you need, and I'll even give you a priceless Nascent Soul Pill! All you have to do is nod your head yes, and I'll hand the pill over immediately!" Even as he spoke, he lifted his right hand, which was holding a crystalline medicinal pill!

The pill instantly erupted with a shocking medicinal aroma that Zhao Long and the others had no trouble identifying as that of a Nascent Soul Pill. Nascent Soul Pills were one of the most important types of cultivation resources in existence at the Great Wall. They were even hard to get in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and extensive records were kept on their distribution. They were second in value only to deva beast souls.

In fact, most people actually valued them more than deva beast souls. After all, despite the fact that using deva beast souls to step into the Nascent Soul stage would lead to incredible power, it would only work if you possessed all five souls of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth.

However, any cultivator in the great circle of the Core Formation stage would have a good chance of achieving a breakthrough with a Nascent Soul Pill. Although breaking through using that method came with certain downsides, such as being less powerful than someone who used deva beast souls, it was still the Nascent Soul stage!

And besides, very few people would be able to build up a full collection of five elements deva beast souls.

Not even Bai Xiaochun had been able to get his hands on a Nascent Soul Pill since he had arrived in Great Wall City. As such, he knew how valuable they were, and here, this white-haired cultivator was holding one of them in his hand. All he had to do was nod his head, and he could have it!

How could Bai Xiaochun not be excited about that? His eyes were burning with passion as he looked at the pill; although he didn't

actually plan to step into Nascent Soul using that method, the pill could still be very useful. With it, he could ascend to the great circle of Core Formation almost immediately!

That would definitely save him a lot of time.

The other three generals looked at the Nascent Soul Pill, their hearts trembling. It wasn't that they didn't have Nascent Soul Pills of their own to offer; they did. However, such pills were so valuable that they couldn't help but hesitate about what to do.

The more Bai Xiaochun looked at that Nascent Soul Pill, the brighter his eyes shone. Taking a deep breath, he glanced over at the other three silent generals, and decided that if he hesitated any longer, he might lose this chance. Just when he was about to nod, an enraged shout ripped through the air.

“Absolutely disgraceful! Screw off, fools!! Dammit, how dare the four of you bastards show up here in Skin Flayers territory and try to steal my people!

“That's nothing more than a Nascent Soul Pill! Ignore them, Xiaochun! I'll give you three Nascent Soul Pills!!” It was none other than Bai Lin, his voice cracking like thunder as he appeared in front of Bai Xiaochun to stare furiously at the four other generals.

As far as he was concerned, the fact that they had shown up in his territory to brazenly attempt to recruit one of his men was completely embarrassing. Thus, his murderous aura raged as he waved his sleeve, sending a blast of air rumbling toward the other generals.

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun backed up, and as for Zhao Long and the others, they had long since fled.

The four generals' faces fell; clearly, none of them had expected Bai Lin to actually unleash an attack. They immediately drew upon the power of their cultivation bases, and were about to start fighting back, when all of a sudden, a beam of light shot out from

the enormous eye atop the pagoda.

The beam slammed down right in the middle of all five generals, forcing them to back away from each other. At the same time, Chen Hetian's ancient voice echoed out with icy coldness.

"You're dismissed, all of you. The five of you are generals, so start acting like it!"

Gritting his teeth, Bai Lin glared at the other four generals. The generals, fully aware that they were in the wrong, cleared their throats, then cast longing glances at Bai Xiaochun before turning and leaving.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, looked around, and then turned his attention to Bai Lin. Feeling a bit embarrassed, he said, "Um, they came looking for me...."

Face grim, Bai Lin walked over to Bai Xiaochun.

"Xiaochun, those four bastards are real tricksters. Don't listen to them. You stay here with me. Don't worry, I'll keep you safe, and I'll keep you supplied with whatever medicinal plants you need. Compensation won't be a problem either, nor will Nascent Soul Pills!" With that, he winced a bit as he pulled two Nascent Soul Pills out of his bag of holding and handed them over to Bai Xiaochun.

"I only have two at the moment. Take them. With a bit of time, I can come up with a way to get a third." Inwardly, Bai Lin was cursing at the fact that he now needed to come up with yet another Nascent Soul Pill. The truth was that they weren't impossible to acquire, but it always took a long time to save up enough resources to buy one.

Bai Xiaochun took the two Nascent Soul Pills, his heart quivering with anticipation. Then he looked back at Bai Lin, suddenly struck with how well the general was treating him. And then he thought about how he would be continuing to serve as the man's

subordinate for some time, and his expression suddenly turned very serious. Shaking his head, he said, “What kind of person do you think I am, General?! If I wanted to join one of the other legions, I could have agreed before you showed up. General, don’t you understand why I was buying time?”

“I can’t afford to provoke those four generals! Therefore, I also couldn’t simply refuse them. And that was why I was waiting for you to come take control of the situation!” With that, he flicked his sleeve. Looking more serious than ever, he continued, “General, you have treated me with great kindness. How could I possibly cause difficulties for such a benefactor? Two Nascent Soul Pills are valuable enough on their own. I won’t take a third from you even if you offer it!” With that, he clasped hands and bowed deeply in salute, feeling very pleased with himself. From what he could tell, his words just now had brimmed with righteous intent, and had been worded perfectly.

Regardless of how much Bai Lin truly trusted what Bai Xiaochun had just said, he was still moved. After looking at Bai Xiaochun for a long moment, he realized that he was definitely the type of person who knew how to act properly in front of others. Taking a deep breath, he said, “Xiaochun, if possible, try to build up enough battle credit over the next ten years to become a major general!

“If you can reach that rank, your status and position will be completely different. Even your River-Defying Sect’s position will change for the better. When major generals return from the five legions to the sect, they become elders of the Hall of Steel Veins. That’s a status that surpasses the position of anyone in any of the other halls!

“If you can reach that level, you would be in one of the most powerful groups in the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! As long as you didn’t ever betray the sect, you could do almost anything you wanted!” Bai Lin didn’t offer any more detailed explanation than that. After making a few more vague statements, he turned

and left.

Afterward, Bai Xiaochun thoughtfully walked back into his room. Then he pulled out his command medallion and checked how much battle credit was required to be promoted to major general, and gasped.

“That much...?”

He was left almost completely speechless. He had no idea how the other major generals had ever managed to get promoted; it took more than a hundred times as much battle credit as it took to get promoted to colonel. That basically implied that it would take a hundred battles such as the one he had just fought in to get that promotion.

“Well forget that, then,” he thought. “I’ll just stick with being a colonel.” Feeling a bit discouraged, he shook his head and put his command medallion away. Then he pulled out a Nascent Soul Pill, whereupon his eyes yet again began to shine.

“The great circle of Core Formation....” Trying to keep calm, he set up some restrictive spells around his residence, and then told Zhao Long and the others that he would be going into secluded meditation. By the time all his preparations were complete, it was deep into the night.

When everything was ready, he slowly put one of the Nascent Soul Pills into his mouth!

Instantly, he began to tremble, and his mind filled with rumbling sounds. Then, shocking energy of heaven and earth surged through him, converging in the location of his Gold Core.

Chapter 505: Great Circle of Gold Core!

RUMBLE!

The boundless power of the Nascent Soul Pill slammed into him like an enraged wave, pouring into his Gold Core and causing his qi passageways to thrum.

His Gold Core, which was filled with a Heaven-Dao aura and nine spiritual seas, rumbled as the spiritual power of heaven and earth crashed into it, causing his cultivation base aura to immediately begin to rise.

Before, he had been in the late Gold Core stage, and very close to the great circle. The frigid qi within him had already reached the eighty percent level, and once he reached the one hundred percent level, he would achieve the breakthrough he sought.

As the energy of heaven and earth filled his Gold Core and its nine spiritual seas, he unleashed his Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, causing frigid qi to pulse out rapidly!

That wasn't ordinary frigid qi, it was of the Frigid Master level!

Once he entered the great circle; his frigid qi would also break through to the Frigid Paragon level!!

As a Frigid Paragon, he would be able to freeze portions of Heavenspan River water. Furthermore, when combined with his other extraordinary abilities and powers, he would be able to freeze anyone in the Core Formation stage in place, and even kill them with a mere thought.

The aura of a Frigid Paragon could even cause major problems for Nascent Soul experts!

After his breakthrough into the great circle, the power of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core would be able to unleash its true potential. It was the most powerful type of Gold Core, the type which could shake the Nascent Soul stage!

Before, he had only been able to fight the Nascent Soul tribal chief by relying on Godly Vestige Pills and his incredible fleshly body strength. But once he stepped into the great circle, then even if he faced ordinary soul cultivators with divine abilities of the Nascent Soul stage, he would definitely be able to fight them toe to toe!

“The great circle of the Gold Core stage....” Such thoughts filled Bai with anticipation, as well as excitement. He had been waiting for this day for a long time, and therefore, he calmed his thoughts and focused on the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, sending pulses of frigid qi out of his body.

Frigid qi filled the building, instantly freezing everything over. In fact, from the outside, the building almost looked like an enormous ice cube!

As the cracking sounds rang out, Zhao Long and the others who were standing guard looked on in shock. Moments later, even some of the nearby pill furnaces were frozen just like the building.

Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had warned them ahead of time of what to expect, and they were some distance away. Were they not, they very well could have been in danger of being frozen in place.

“What technique does our exalted colonel cultivate!?”

“That... that frigid qi is so strong! It’s horrifying!!”

Zhao Long and Liu Li exchanged glances, as did everyone else. Even as they looked on, frigid qi filled more than half of the Armory!

Everywhere it went became a world of frozen ice!

Thankfully, during the course of Bai Xiaochun’s rise to prominence, the other grandmasters had all moved away. If they hadn’t, they would also have been frozen in place in their residences.

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, the

entire Armory was frozen. It looked like an ice mountain that astonished not only Zhao Long and the others in the regiment, but also the other Skin Flayers in the area.

There were even major generals with Nascent Soul cultivation bases who were astonished, and as for Bai Lin, he personally flew over to see what was happening. After looking down at the Armory, his eyes began to shine with a strange light.

“If he’d possessed frigid qi of this level before, he would have been able to fight his way back to safety much more easily than he did.” Eyes sparkling with approval, he quickly issued orders for more Skin Flayers to come and stand guard as Dharma protectors.

The last to take note was the deva Chen Hetian. A beam of light shot out from the enormous eye to shine upon the Armory, which closely examined the situation before retracting a moment later.

“This seems to be some new transformation of frigid qi....” Chen Hetian murmured thoughtfully.

Time passed. Bai Xiaochun’s session of secluded meditation lasted for several months, during which time fighting resumed outside the Great Wall, but little more than small-scale skirmishes. Nothing like the fighting earlier that year occurred.

Eventually, his months of cultivation led to a crucial moment. The energy of heaven and earth provided by the Nascent Soul Pill had converged in his Gold Core, causing his spiritual seas to vibrate as frigid qi completely froze his Gold Core!

From the look of it, his core was transforming into an Ice Core!

By this point, the Gold Core was more than ninety percent iced up, and pulsed with a freezing aura that left Bai Xiaochun motionless and seemingly frozen.

Another three days passed. That evening, when the final bit of the Gold Core came to be covered with ice, Bai Xiaochun’s Gold Core truly had transformed into an Ice Core!

Rumbling sounds echoed out in his mind as his eyes snapped open. At the same time, boundless streams of energy erupted out from inside of him.

Cultivation base breakthrough!

No longer was he in the late Gold Core stage, he was now in the great circle!

“It worked!” he shouted, his eyes gleaming with strange light. As of this moment, he could sense that the golden Ice Core inside of him contained frigid qi that vastly surpassed anything from before. Furthermore, as that qi flowed through him, it didn’t harm in the least.

He slowly extended his right hand, causing a stream of frigid qi to emerge from his fingertip. Instantly, the layers of ice around him began to tremble, as though an incredible pressure had suddenly descended onto the existing ice, a pressure from the emperor of all freezing things!

Instantly, more ice began to build up in the armory, causing all of the cultivators who had been standing guard to back up to avoid it.

“Frigid Paragon...?” Bai Xiaochun murmured, his expression the same as ever as he looked thoughtfully at his fingertip. For some reason, it felt as if some unexplainable transformation was occurring to the Ice Core inside of him.

It was almost as if something were growing inside....

A thoughtful expression appeared on his face. Although he couldn’t be sure if something really was inside of the Ice Core, he could definitely sense some familiar fluctuations, and was certain that if he made another breakthrough, the results would be astonishing!

“It almost seems like control power...?” he murmured.

“Wait, I get it. Since I cultivate the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, and have just made a major breakthrough, then I

most likely have Will growing inside of the Ice Core!”

Bai Xiaochun already had his own speculations and understanding regarding the so-called Will. After a bit of time, he suppressed his curiosity; the answer would come when his Willpower was eventually brought out into the world. Then he would know for sure.

“My cultivation base is now in the great circle of the Gold Core stage. Next is my Undying Live Forever Technique....” The strength of the Nascent Soul Pill had already pushed him into the great circle, but there was still a bit of power left, which he could transform into life force.

“These Nascent Soul Pills really live up to their reputation. What a pity I don’t have the medicine formula. Of course, based on what I can tell, main ingredient is almost certainly immortal birthing grass!”

Immortal birthing grass was a near-extinct type of medicinal plant whose primary function was to provide life force power. In the legends, that type of life force could be used to become an immortal. Of course, that wasn’t true at all, and yet, it went to show how valuable immortal birthing grass was.

“From what I can tell, as long as I prevent the Nascent Soul Pill from taking my core and forming a Nascent Soul, then I can absorb the life force with my Undying Live Forever Technique, and make a huge advancement!

“The third level of the Undying Codex is the Undying Tendons. I’ve already cultivated it in both arms and both legs, and am lacking only in the torso and head. The requirements for the torso are significant....” After a moment of thought, he looked at the second Nascent Soul Pill, gritted his teeth, and put it in his mouth!

Anyone on the outside who saw him consume a second Nascent Soul Pill would have been completely flabbergasted. For one thing, Nascent Soul Pills were incredibly valuable, and furthermore, few

people would ever need to consume more than one to make their breakthrough.

As soon as he consumed the second pill, the energy of heaven and earth erupted out into his qi passageways. Almost immediately, it began to head toward his Ice Core, where normally speaking, it would shatter the core and begin to form a Nascent Soul!

However, as soon as the energy began to speed toward the Ice Core, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered, and he unleashed his Undying Live Forever Technique. Rumbling sounds could be heard as a huge vortex formed in his torso, and a shocking gravitational force sprang into being. In the blink of an eye, all of the energy of heaven and earth veered off course and began to pour into that vortex.

Chapter 506: The True Undying Hex

The Undying Live Forever Technique could be cultivated with incredible rapidity as long as enough life force was available. Bai Xiaochun had learned that many years ago.

Also, he had come to understand that cultivating it required a huge, almost preposterous expenditure of resources. There was no way the River-Defying Sect could sustain such a resource drainage, and even the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, one of the riversource sects, would be hard-pressed to do so.

And as of this moment, he had only reached the third level of the Undying Codex, the Undying Tendons. Later, he would need to work on the Undying Bones and Undying Blood, and could scarcely imagine what level of life force would be required for that.

“I can’t worry about all of that!” he thought, his eyes shining with determination as the vortex in his torso sucked in the life force from the Nascent Soul Pill. Almost immediately, his body began to radiate intense heat that began to melt the surrounding ice, and caused his blood to seethe as it surged through his veins.

As the heat filled him, he could clearly sense his qi passageways being reformed. As they were, black light filled him, the representation of powerful fleshly body power flowing through his body.

As it connected to the power in his four limbs, something like a restrictive spell began to spread out to surround him!

Time passed, although Bai Xiaochun couldn’t be sure how much. Suddenly, his eyes opened to find that his entire body with the exception of his head was radiating a black light that was painful to look at. Eyes shining, he cast his senses throughout his body, and could immediately tell that his fleshly body power had increased far beyond its previous level.

However, that was not the most shocking aspect to the change. He could also sense that his body was much lighter. Or at least, that was what it felt like. As of this moment, he was quite sure that he could move so quickly that he could pierce through the air.

Curious, Bai Xiaochun was struck with the desire to test out his theory. However, he suppressed that desire and decided to examine himself a bit further. Suddenly, he gasped.

“This....” To his delight, he realized that he was just on the verge of making contact with the next shackle of mortality!

That feeling brightened his spirits immediately. From what he could tell, all it would take would be one more bit of advancement to spread his Undying Live Forever Technique to his head. Unfortunately, the life force from the Nascent Soul Pill was already fading away.

“What a pity,” he thought sadly. However, he was still excited. “I’m in the great circle of the Gold Core stage, and made a big breakthrough with my Undying Live Forever Technique. As of this point, not a single ordinary Core Formation cultivator would ever dare to provoke me!”

Laughing heartily, he rose to his feet. No longer suppressing his desire to pierce through the air, he took a step forward.

When he did, the layers of ice in front of him exploded, and Bai Xiaochun vanished!

As that happened, the other layers of ice in the area cracked and shattered, and in the blink of an eye, the building was revealed. The effects quickly spread out into the courtyard, and within the space of a few breaths of time, to the entire Armory!

Cracking sounds filled the air, causing the Skin Flayers to look around in surprise. Zhao Long and the others from the regiment looked on in shock as the masses of ice, and the mountain that had been the residence, all collapsed!

Everything in the Armory, from buildings to pill furnaces, all shattered as they transformed into a blast of wind that spread out in all directions.

Then, countless gasps rang out as people realized that Bai Xiaochun was nowhere to be seen.

“The grandmaster is missing?!”

“W-what’s... what’s going on!?” Zhao Long, Liu Li, and others from the regiment rushed over to the collapsed residence, and sure enough, Bai Xiaochun was gone.

As they began to search for him, something happened on the battlefield outside the Great Wall. Of course, there was no fighting going on at the moment, although the landscape was shattered and there were corpses everywhere. That was how the area outside the Great Wall usually looked, like a scene from the underworld.

Occasionally, various Wildlands animals that enjoyed feasting on carrion could be seen munching on severed limbs and crunching on other parts of the corpses.

Suddenly, ripples spread out into the air, after which a black glow appeared, which seemed to take the shape of a magical symbol.

The carrion-eating animals were startled, and many shot off in the opposite direction, not daring to get close to the black glow. At the same time, the cultivators on duty atop the Great Wall also noticed what was happening. Some of the magical canons even began to warm up, as if they were about to unleash attacks.

The ripples outside of the wall eventually formed into the shape of a bubble, which popped, after which a figure staggered out. Killing intent appeared in the eyes of the cultivators on the wall, and they were about to attack when suddenly, some of them began to call out in surprise.

“Grandmaster Bai!!”

“It’s Bai Xiaochun!!” Gasps could be heard as the cultivators realized who it was they were looking at, and yet were unable to reconcile his sudden appearance on the battlefield.

The person down there was definitely none other than Bai Xiaochun!

At first, he glanced around in confusion. When he finally realized where he was, his scalp began to prickle in fear.

“What am I doing here?!” Instantly, his anxiety mounted as he thought about what would happen if a group of soul cultivators suddenly showed up. Without any hesitation, he began to speed back toward the Great Wall.

“Let me in!” he cried as he flew along. Seeing that the cultivators on the Great Wall were hesitating, he quickly pulled out his identity medallion to prove who he was. With that, he passed through the shield and landed on the wall itself.

The cultivators still seemed a bit suspicious though, and began to ask some questions.

“Grandmaster Bai, what... what were you doing out there?”

“We didn’t see anyone go out beyond the wall. You’re supposed to get permission from a general before doing that!”

“Um, an accident, that’s all,” Bai Xiaochun said, clearing his throat. “Just a little accident.” Now that he was back inside the protection of the Great Wall, his heart began to calm down. Earlier, he had been attempting to test out his ability to pierce through the air, and hadn’t been expecting to suddenly step into a void of darkness.

Within that void, he felt like his body was collapsing, and, terrified, had struggled to emerge. When he did, he was dropped onto the battlefield outside of the Great Wall.

The mere thought of what had just occurred left his heart pounding with residual terror. After offering some more vague

explanations, he hurried back to the city.

“Way too dangerous,” he thought. “I definitely can't take risks like that anymore....” Despite his lingering fear, though, he had to admit that what he had just done was extraordinary. He had actually pierced through the Great Wall and its spell formation shield with something almost like a minor teleportation.

“Or maybe that's not it.... After all, outside of battle situations, the huge eye will prevent cultivators from the five legions from leaving the shield without orders. And of course, they can't get back in without an identity medallion.

“And yet, I definitely managed to get out. Why?” He blinked a few times, and after a moment, couldn't help but feel that what he had done just now felt like a strange manifestation of his Undying Tendons.

“Don't tell me it's the Undying Hex? Maybe it can affect or even bypass other restrictive spells?” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun considered doing some more tests. However, the sensation of almost being ripped apart in that void was something he couldn't stop thinking about.

“No, it's too dangerous. If I want to do some more tests, I'll have to wait until my Undying Tendons are complete, and I've broken through the next shackle.” Shaking his head, he finally got back to the Armory. That was when Zhao Long and the rest of the regiment finally found him. Zhao Long immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

The members of his regiment felt more than ever that Bai Xiaochun was a mysterious and enigmatic figure, and were shocked that he had been able to vanish despite all of them being present to stand guard.

“Congratulations on your breakthrough, Grandmaster!”

“Grandmaster, do you want us to start rebuilding things?”

As of this point, the Armory was uninhabitable, but as a colonel in the Skin Flayers, he had his own command center. Therefore, he simply waved his hand and said, “We’re done with this place for now. Let’s go to my command center!”

Chapter 507: I Have To Become A Major General!

Great Wall City was divided up into east, west, south, north, and central districts, one for each of the five legions.

The Skin Flayers occupied the east district, which was further divided up into ten garrisons, one for each of the major generals. The major generals were all Nascent Soul experts, people who had climbed mountains of corpses and swam through seas of blood to get to their current position. Their murderous auras and battle prowess vastly exceeded those of others in their same cultivation level.

Without illustrious service performed for the army, and also powerful backers, it was virtually impossible to become a major general!

As for the garrisons, they were divided into ten command centers, which belonged to the ten colonels who led them. As for the lieutenants and captains, they occupied locations within the command centers of the colonels.

Bai Xiaochun's command center was in the garrison belonging to Major General Zhou Xingjun of the 3rd Corps, right next to Li Hongming's command center. After Bai Xiaochun was promoted to colonel, Major General Zhou Xingjun had almost immediately arranged for troops to be assigned to him.

Clearly, the army cared a lot about Bai Xiaochun, because all of those cultivators came from the group of 10,000 that he had personally rescued off of the battlefield. Originally, they had been members of other parts of the army, but had been specifically reassigned by General Bai Lin.

The entire group of cultivators felt incredible gratitude toward Bai Xiaochun, and had personally witnessed his ferocity and

madness in the heat of battle. As such, they were fully convinced of his abilities, and were very excited to serve in his regiment.

As Bai Xiaochun was making his way over to the command center, some of the cultivators of the regiment were drilling on the parade ground, practicing the use of various divine abilities, their faces expressionless. Others were sparring amongst themselves. Although everyone appeared to be completely ferocious, they all maintained careful control at all times.

The majority sat crosslegged, meditating in silence. The entire command center seemed filled with a very somber air, and a weighty pressure that would make any outsider hesitant to enter it.

The place had been like this ever since Bai Xiaochun was promoted to colonel, and in fact, the troops under the command of the other colonels all trembled in fear when they passed by it.

Suddenly, a beam of light appeared in the sky which shot down toward the command center. Immediately, all the soldiers inside looked up with cold eyes.

Within the beam of light was a middle-aged man with a somber expression and pulsing veins of steel. “The exalted colonel is coming!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the cultivators in the command center trembled with excitement.

Immediately, the captains began to shout out orders. “Get into formation!”

Soon, the entire place was buzzing.

When Bai Xiaochun finally arrived, he saw many familiar faces lined up outside the command center. As soon as the group caught sight of him, they stepped forward a pace and then shouted out in a mighty voice, “Greetings, Colonel!”

Their words echoed like thunder to fill the entire 3rd Corps. As

for Li Hongming and the other colonels, they were shaken, and quite a few of them rushed out of their own command centers to see what was happening.

What they saw was the assembled cultivators of Bai Xiaochun's regiment, pulsing with tenacity, as if their very bones were filled with the desire to do battle. It was as if all Bai Xiaochun had to do was say the word, and they would raze any area to the ground in a blaze of destruction!

Li Hongming and the other colonels were deeply shaken.

“Valiant troops and a gallant officer!!”

“Not only are they grateful to Bai Xiaochun, but they also personally witnessed his veins of steel and vicious fighting. Therefore, they truly respect and admire him. Because of their zealous devotion to him, until the day comes that they pay back the kindness he has shown, they might as well be his personal army!!”

This was Bai Xiaochun first time visiting his command center and seeing all the cultivators he recognized from that fateful battle. Now that he could sense how heroic and dauntless they were, it got his own blood pumping a bit faster. All of a sudden, he found himself thinking about how he had faced countless dangers that day during the war.

After a long moment, he took a breath as a feeling of profound emotion filled him. After all, he knew that, while he had saved them, they had also saved him!

The looks of reverence and awe with which they gazed at him caused his heart to tremble. Without any hesitation, he waved his hand toward the command center and said, “Come on men, let's drink and eat together! What battle credit we earn, we spend together, and when we have to flee for our lives, we do it shoulder to shoulder!”

Bai Xiaochun felt that his words were particularly domineering, and when the cultivators under his command heard them, they exchanged amused glances, then clasped hands and shouted, “Sir, yes sir!”

As their voices resonated through the area, Li Hongming and the other colonels exchanged odd glances. They had seen quite a few commanding officers give speeches to encourage their troops, but had never heard anyone say things as directly as Bai Xiaochun had.

Some distance away in the Skin Flayers’ district was an enormous building that looked like a coffin, within which Bai Lin stood looking in Bai Xiaochun’s direction, shaking his head and smiling.

Ten armor-clad individuals stood near him, most of them middle-aged, but some older. Moments ago, the group had been discussing business relating to the Skin Flayers, but after the scene which had just played out, they had sent their divine sense over to observe, and now, all of them seemed to be reminiscing about the past.

“This Bai Xiaochun sure is candid,” Bai Lin said with a chuckle. “I can’t believe he just said that they would flee from battle shoulder to shoulder.” He turned to look at one of the group of ten, an old man with white hair. “Brother Zhou, Bai Xiaochun is very important to the Skin Flayers. Please make sure to take special care of him.”

The ten men surrounding Bai Lin were none other than the ten major generals of the Skin Flayers. As for the white-haired old man, he was Bai Xiaochun’s commanding officer, Major General Zhou Xingjun of the 3rd Corps. Upon hearing Bai Lin’s words, he smiled and nodded his head.

“Don’t worry, General. I’ll make sure to keep Grandmaster Bai safe and sound.”

Bai Lin nodded in response, then looked away from the scene

outside and resumed his discussion with the major generals.

Meanwhile, the members of Bai Xiaochun's regiment clustered around him as he headed into the command center. Once inside, he looked around at what was to be his new residence. As for Zhao Long and his original squad, they were now Bai Xiaochun's personal guard, and they quickly made strict rules regarding who was allowed into the command center. Without express orders, no one from outside the regiment could gain entrance.

After all, not only was Bai Xiaochun a colonel, but he was also on the Wildlands Execution List, and in the top 10 at that. The reward on his head was a deva beast soul, something that would be lucrative to Wildlanders and cultivators alike....

In fact, in the past, there had been situations in which people on the Execution List were killed by cultivators, not Wildlanders.

Before long, half a year had gone by.

By now, Bai Xiaochun had been serving at the Great Wall for two years. After his promotion to colonel, fighting went on as usual beyond the wall, but they were all skirmishes that didn't come close to the scale of the huge battle the year before.

Bai Xiaochun was now very familiar with life in Great Wall City, and had taken up a new hobby. Every few days, he would don his colonel's armor and strut out of his command center, surrounded by large numbers of his men, to stroll through the city.

He very much enjoyed the looks of awe and envy that people cast in his direction when he appeared in public. In fact, it was something he would never grow tired of.

At first, Zhao Long and his original squad found this very odd, as did the other cultivators in the regiment. However, they gradually grew used to it, and realized that this was just Bai Xiaochun's personality. Although it was a bit embarrassing, it gradually became nothing out of the ordinary.

However, Bai Xiaochun continued to do it so often that he appeared to be neglecting his day-to-day duties. It reached the point where Bai Lin caught wind of it. Annoyed, he made some special arrangements. The next day, when Bai Xiaochun led his regiment out of the command center to enjoy the gazes of the other cultivators in the army, he had just begun to savor the buzz of conversation around him when all of a sudden, a group of several thousand cultivators appeared, all of them wearing suits of armor. As they proceeded along, they cleared a 300-meter path through the crowds in front of them.

Not even Bai Xiaochun was exempt, and was forced off to the side.

“What are you people doing?!” he complained.

Without any hesitation, the cultivator in question flashed a command medallion which was emblazoned with the surname Nian, as well as the sigil of the Skin Flayers! “Major General Nian Herong is coming through. Back up, all of you!”

Within the five legions, the only people who had command medallions with their surnames on them were the major generals!

As soon as the command medallion appeared, the cultivator didn’t need to say anything else. With the wave of his hand, the thousands of cultivators under his command began to drive Bai Xiaochun and the others backward. Bai Xiaochun wasn’t too happy about that, but there was little he could do about. All he could do was watch as the nearly 10,000 cultivators cleared a path through the area. Moments later, a dazzling sight appeared not too far off in the distance. It was an old man in a crimson suit of armor, flanked by ten colonels, all of whom had respectful expression on their faces.

Everyone who had been cleared out of the 300-meter path began to cheer and cry out fervently, in a way that vastly surpassed how they had reacted when they saw Bai Xiaochun. The drone of their

enthusiasm instantly bore deep into Bai Xiaochun's ears.

“It's a major general!”

“Heavens! You hardly ever see the major generals walking around....”

“The major generals of Great Wall City can shake all creation! They're the kind of people who cause the lands to tremble wherever they go!”

Bai Xiaochun could merely gape in astonishment at the ostentatious and domineering scene which was playing out in front of him. At the same time, he felt a bit down-hearted.

“What's so amazing about him?” he thought. “He's just a major general, right...?” Then he gritted his teeth.

“I have to become a major general!”

Chapter 508: Don't Tell Me I Have To Seduce Mistress Red-Dust...

Bai Xiaochun had left in the highest of spirits, and came back feeling like he was at the bottom of the barrel. After returning to his command center, he thought back to the sight of the major general's procession, and felt very irritated.

“Major general....” he thought, gritting his teeth. Then he considered how the major general had walked along with an escort of ten colonels, while he himself was only a colonel.

“I can't settle for this. I have to become a major general!” With that, his eyes began to shine with determination. Over the course of the past half year, he had spent almost no time on cultivation, nor had he done any pill concocting. Most of his time had been spent enjoying the perks of being a colonel. However, as of this moment, he had received a sharp reminder that being a colonel was not the end of the line for him.

Now that the idea of being a major general was stirring in his mind, he thought back to how Bai Lin had encouraged him to work hard to get promoted.

“If I retire as a major general,” he murmured, “then when I get back to the sect, I'll be an elder in the Hall of Steel Veins....” Realizing that he didn't have all of the information he needed, he decided to go out and make some inquiries.

The truth was that such matters were not secret within the five legions, and were in fact quite well-known. It only took a bit of asking around for Bai Xiaochun to get all of the information he was looking for. Elders in the Hall of Steel Veins had a position far above ordinary elders. In fact, they were on a level that put them only slightly below the sect leader, a fact which left Bai Xiaochun gasping and deeply moved.

“How is that even possible!? This is the sect leader of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect we’re talking about! He’s only in the Nascent Soul stage, but he’s still in a very high position. And elders in the Hall of Steel Veins are just below that...?” Bai Xiaochun almost couldn’t believe it at first, but after further enquiries, he came to understand why it was the case.

“The five legions operate beyond the control of the sect leader. Even the deva stationed at the Great Wall is only here to oversee things. The only person who directly controls the five legions is the demigod patriarch!

“The reason the Hall of Steel Veins is so powerful is because it only follows his orders!” Bai Xiaochun was both flabbergasted and also palpitating with eagerness.

If he could somehow manage to become a major general, then when his commission was up and he went back to the sect, he could get a set of five elements deva beast souls and step into the Nascent Soul stage. Furthermore, he could also become an elder in the Hall of Steel Veins!

When that happened, he would have a very high position, higher than ordinary elders in the sect. Not only would that be a big help to the River-Defying Sect, but it would also be immensely beneficial on a personal level.

The mere idea left his heart burning with anticipation, to the point where his eyes sparkled with the light of countless stars.

“I absolutely have to become a major general!” he said, slapping his thigh.

Now that he had set his goal, though, it immediately led to new anxiety. After all, he had already calculated how much battle credit it would take to become a major general, which was more than a hundred times the amount he had earned in that huge battle.

In the better part of a year which had passed since then, no major

battles had even occurred.

More than a month went by, and he only got more depressed. Eventually, he climbed to the top of the great wall and looked out toward the Wildlands. Unfortunately, all he could do was wish that their huge army would come back.

“Why aren’t they attacking...?” he said as he stood there sighing. “Dammit! I don’t have much time to work with, only seven or eight more years. What am I supposed to do...?”

“I guess the savages and soul cultivators are just too scared, and don’t dare to come over and fight!”

The other cultivators noticed how he was acting, and heard his constant sighing. Soon, they began to exchanged awkward glances.

As far as they were concerned, it was a good thing that the Wildlands savages hadn’t attacked in full force. However, Bai Xiaochun didn’t seem to think so, which they found very strange.

Of course, the sight of him acting in such a way led some of them sigh inwardly and muse, “Why aren’t they attacking? Isn’t it because of you? If it weren’t for you and your special methods, they would be doing things the way they usually did, and attacking several times per month.”

Bai Xiaochun waited a bit longer, and yet there was no change. Every day that went by, he continued to try to think of a solution to the problem, until his eyes were bloodshot. Finally, he decided that he had to do something to speed things up.

“Fine, if the savages insist on being so uncooperative, then I’ll just have to think of a new way to earn battle credit! I absolutely have to become a major general!” With that, he headed toward the huge pagoda in the middle of the city.

From what he remembered last time he had gone to exchange battle credit, the five legions had an Execution List just like the Wildlands did. Taking the heads of some of the people on that list

came with hefty rewards.

“Now that I’m a colonel, I have lots of powerful experts under my command. I refuse to believe that I can’t earn some battle credit with their help!” It didn’t take Bai Xiaochun very long to reach the central district, and the base of the tower, where quite a group of cultivators was gathered. When they caught sight of him, they gave him solemn nods of greeting.

Bai Xiaochun looked up at the eye at the top of the tower, then pulled out his identity medallion and sent some spiritual sense into it to begin browsing the Execution List. The first thing that jumped out to him was the first name on the list.

As soon as he saw it, his eyes went wide.

“Mistress Red-Dust!”

Mistress Red-Dust’s information was clearly listed there in first place on the list. She had a Deva Realm cultivation base, and was a ruthless fighter who was cold and cruel to the bone. In fact, there was even a reminder that, because she was a deva, it was best to avoid her at all costs.

The number of cultivators she had killed since she made her debut was shocking to behold, including many Nascent Soul cultivators.

Most shocking of all was that she hadn’t even been practicing cultivation for 200 years!

To become a deva so quickly seemed almost impossible to Bai Xiaochun, especially considering how impoverished the Wildlands were. There was no energy of heaven and earth there, only soul power. And yet, despite being in those conditions, this Mistress Red-Dust had managed to set a heaven-defying pace in her cultivation.

“I remember Mistress Red-Dust....” Bai Xiaochun murmured. As soon as he focused on her name, a picture appeared in his mind. It

depicted a young woman, more beautiful than Chen Manyao, wearing red garments that accentuated her good looks, and yet made her seem very dangerous. Her murderous aura was shocking to the extreme, even though it was just a picture.

Bai Xiaochun remembered seeing her in the flesh during the battle outside the Great Wall. She had been in the middle of fighting Chen Hetian when she had actually made a move to try to kill Bai Xiaochun....

Of course, anyone who looked at Mistress Red-Dust's name on the list would see the same image Bai Xiaochun was seeing.

She was a spectacular figure, who had a reward on her head so high that it was astonishing to behold. Anyone who killed her would be promoted to general!

If there were no generals who needed to be replaced, then a new legion would be created! That was a reward that surpassed even Bai Xiaochun's ideal of becoming a major general. As soon as he saw that reward, his eyes burned with passion and envy. However, it also caused him to purse his lips.

"So stupid! The only person who could take that shrew out is a deva, and why would a deva want to be a general in the army?" Bai Xiaochun shook his head. If he was good enough to take out a deva, then he wouldn't be sitting around at the Great Wall. He would definitely be back in the River-Defying Sect already. Besides, when it came to devas, they weren't the type of people he would ever be willing to offend.

Sighing, he went on to look at the second name on the list, which also belonged to a deva, who went by the Daoist name Wakening Insects. The number of merit points offered up for his death was shocking, to say the least.

Astonished, Bai Xiaochun continued to go down the list. Soon, he began to frown as he realized that all the names in the top 30 were those of Nascent Soul stage necromancers. Although some of the

names at the bottom of the list were Core Formation cultivators, the battle credit reward for them wasn't very high. After a few calculations, Bai Xiaochun found that he would have to kill everyone from 30th place all the way down into the 200's to earn enough battle credit to become a major general.

"What am I supposed to do, then...?" he thought, sighing. Obviously, he had to give up on the idea of killing people on the Execution List. It was simply too dangerous of an undertaking. However, the thought of the honor, glory, and benefits that came with being a major general were something he just couldn't give up on. There had to be a way to get more battle credit.

"What a headache!" he thought. "How am I supposed to pull something like this off when the only thing I'm good at is concocting pills?"

"Wait a second. That's not right. There is something I'm good at!" Stopping in place, he thought back to his time hanging out with Zhao Tianjiao, and how he had called himself a love saint. Suddenly, his heart began to pound.

Looking back at the Execution List, he blinked a few times, feeling a bit torn.

"Don't tell me that in order to become a major general, I'm going to have to rely on my sex appeal to seduce Mistress Red-Dust...?" The mere thought left him grieving in indignation. That was especially true considering that she was so much older than him. Although she was pretty, who knew what kind of eccentricities she had? The more he thought about it, the more that plan seemed like a huge sacrifice.

"Not worth it..." he thought, feeling more crestfallen than ever. With that, he abandoned the idea.

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Quick note about Mistress Red-Dust's name. First of all, this is a

Daoist name, not her real name. That fact is not confirmed until later in the novel, but it seems pretty obvious from the get-go. It's a hard name to pin down how to translate. There are different ways to interpret it, but I'm going with the way the term is used in Buddhist philosophy. The "red dust" is a metaphor referring to the world of mortals or human society. In terms of why she would have such a name, there is no explanation provided at this point, so you will have to contemplate that on your own.

Chapter 509: My Own Mission

“Could it be that the heavens are jealous of me, Bai Xiaochun? Have I been doomed to never become a major general?!” Feeling overwhelmed by sorrow, he clasped his hands behind his back and looked up into the sky. After a long moment, he sighed and turned to leave the pagoda.

However, in that very moment, one of the cultivators nearby opened his bag of holding and produced a collection of vengeful souls. Bags of holding couldn't be used to hold vengeful souls for long periods of time, and in fact, these souls were already starting to grow dim. As soon as they flew out into the open, a gravitational force sprang out from the huge eye.

In the briefest of moments, the souls were sucked up, which seemed to enliven the huge eye.

Bai Xiaochun suddenly stopped in place, his eyes growing wide. Clearly, after turning in all of the vengeful souls, the cultivator from just now had been given some battle credit. Instantly, Bai Xiaochun's spirits lifted.

Eyes shining brightly, he slapped his thigh.

“Of course! How could I have forgotten? You can turn in souls to get battle credit.... In fact, as long as you keep turning in souls, your battle credit will continue to climb.”

However, only a moment after getting excited, he suddenly felt even more down than before. “That won't work either....” After all, there wasn't very much fighting going on lately, which meant that there were very few souls on the battlefield. He was extremely adept at taking care of souls, but had nowhere to exercise his talents. Sighing, he trudged away.

After returning to his command center, he sat there in frustration, mulling the matter over from different angles. In the

end, he could only think of one solution. If he wanted to get more souls, he would need to leave the Great Wall and go out into the Wildlands to search for them himself.

“No way, I can’t do that! It’s too dangerous! There’s no way I’m going to openly court death.” Sighing, he gave up on the idea. No longer in the mood to go strolling about outside the command center, he decided to focus on cultivating his Undying Live Forever Technique.

The third level of the Undying Live Forever Technique was the Undying Tendons. All he had to do was cultivate that part of the technique using his head, and he would be finished. At the moment, he had plenty of medicinal plants that he could use to make medicinal pills, and yet, he knew that the head was different from the limbs and torso. Therefore, he went about his cultivation cautiously. After a bit of work, he was able to confirm that there was indeed some danger in cultivating the Undying Tendons in his head. Therefore, he pondered the matter for quite some time before proceeding.

Before long, half a year had gone by. In a few more months, Bai Xiaochun would reach the three-year-mark at the Great Wall. As the months passed, there were a few battles here and there. Every time a battle came along, Bai Xiaochun would get very excited. Although he wouldn’t personally participate, his subordinates would fight, and as a result, he would get some vengeful souls and battle credit.

However, he was still a very long way away from becoming a major general.

When he was only two months away from the three-year-mark, he was meditating in his command center, working on his Undying Live Forever Technique, when he realized that he was fifty percent finished with the Undying Tendons in his head. However, it was at that point that he began to slow down with his cultivation. It was definitely dangerous to work on the Undying Tendons in the head,

and he had almost fallen into deadly crises on multiple occasions.

One day, he suddenly realized that something was glowing red inside his bag of holding. Surprised, he opened his eyes from his meditation and looked down.

“What’s going on...?” he thought curiously. As soon as he opened his bag of holding, dazzling red light spilled out, light that was coming from his identity medallion.

“It’s glowing?” he thought. This was the same medallion he had received upon debarking the huge ship years ago. He remembered being told to never lose it or allow it to be damaged, lest he be incapable of going into and out of the Great Wall. Furthermore, it was also his ticket back to the sect.

He had never forgotten those warnings. Afterward, he had even performed a few experiments, and had confirmed that the medallion was made in some fashion that made it impossible for him to affect it in any way.

Now, that very same identity medallion was shining with blinding red light. If that were all there were to the situation, it might not have been a big deal. But to Bai Xiaochun’s astonishment and anxiety, he found that the jade medallion was... emanating the fluctuations of imminent self-detonation.

“What’s happening?!” he thought, leaping to his feet, his face falling. Not daring to be hesitant, he cast some divine sense into the medallion, whereupon a message appeared in his mind.

“You have only two months until the deadline to complete your first mission. If there is no record of you leaving the Great Wall within that time, this jade medallion will self-destruct!”

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped, and his eyes went wide. After sending more divine sense into the medallion to confirm that he had received the message correctly, he began to drip with sweat.

“Dammit! I knew I had to go on three missions during the ten-

year trial, but this is the first time I've heard about having to do one within the first three years!" His anxiety immediately began to grow as he thought of the prospect of the medallion being destroyed, and being unable to return to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

"This is blackmail!" he fumed. The truth was that he wasn't the only one in this position. There were other chosen who hadn't gone on any missions during their first three years, who were now similarly staring at their brightly-glowing identity medallions.

Clearly, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had prepared methods to deal with any lazy disciples who neglected to go on missions.

Wracked with anxiety, Bai Xiaochun flew out of his command center to find Bai Lin. Considering his current rank, he didn't have to make any special requests to see the general, and was soon right in front of him.

"General, save me!" he cried piteously.

Bai Lin had been meditating, but as soon as he heard Bai Xiaochun's words, he opened his eyes. Before he could even ask about the situation, Bai Xiaochun held the glowing red medallion aloft and explained.

When he was done, he stood there staring at Bai Lin with wide eyes with a look that said, I'm your subordinate, you have to help me!

Most of Bai Lin's subordinates were lifetime devotees of the five legions, who had enlisted directly into the Hall of Steel Veins. As such, he wasn't very familiar with the rules and regulations regarding the chosen who were out on trials by fire. Furthermore, were it not for the fact that Bai Xiaochun had put on such a spectacular performance when he had first arrived, Bai Lin would never have conscripted him.

"Alright, calm down!" Bai Lin said. Pulling out a jade slip, he sent

out a few messages of inquiry. After receiving the information he needed, he slowly looked back up at Bai Xiaochun.

Nervous, Bai Xiaochun said, “General, I’m a colonel! It won’t really be a big deal if the medallion self-destructs... will it?”

“You are indeed a colonel in the Skin Flayers,” Bai Lin replied, “but you were conscripted. If you were a major general it might be a different story, but... you still have to follow the rules of the sect.

“I should have thought of this myself, but don’t worry, I’ll help you resolve the situation.” This was Bai Lin’s first time seeing Bai Xiaochun in such a state, so he smiled and immediately started to call upon his network of contacts to try to solve the problem.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that Bai Lin was starting to transmit a large number of messages through his jade slip, and remembered how he had an important background, he started to calm down. However, after a bit of time passed, a frown appeared on Bai Lin’s face. Bai Xiaochun’s heart immediately began to pound.

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, an unsightly expression could be seen on Bai Lin’s face. Putting away the jade slip, he hesitated for a moment and then said, “Hmph. Those people back at the sect are complete philistines. Not flexible at all. Bai Xiaochun, I can reduce your mission requirement from three to one. But you’ll still have to go out at least once. Take some time to think about it. After all, it’s only one mission, right?”

Bai Lin was actually feeling a bit embarrassed. He really had tried to help Bai Xiaochun out, but had made so many special requests of the sect in recent years that it made things difficult. As for the elder in charge of the missions, he simply wouldn’t budge. Unfortunately, there was nothing more Bai Lin could do other than offer Bai Xiaochun a bit of comfort.

Bai Xiaochun felt like crying, but could tell that Bai Lin had already done all he could by reducing the mission requirement down to one.

“General, I'm in the top 10 of the Wildlands Execution List! The people out there hate me to death! They'll kill me as soon as they see me. I... I don't dare to go beyond the wall!”

Bai Lin cleared his throat. “Don't worry. Look, just put on a disguise! Go out, finish a mission, and get back as soon as possible. Nobody will even notice that you left. Only the two of us will be in on the secret.

“Besides, although the sect won't budge on the mission issue, there are other ways I can help. For example, the rule says you have to go on a mission, which means that Great Wall missions also count. Since you're a colonel, I hereby give you the authority to post your own missions. Just make a mission for yourself, and go accomplish it. Simple. All you have to do is make sure that it's a mission suitable for the Gold Core stage. After all, the true spirit in the eye of the pagoda is responsible for declaring missions officially complete.”

“I can post my own missions... and go on one of those....” Bai Xiaochun's eyes lit up. Laughing heartily, he clasped hands in salute and then left.

Chapter 510: Highway Robbery!

“At one’s darkest hour, a glimmer of hope always appears!” Bai Xiaochun hurried back excitedly to his command center, his mind abuzz with ideas. As soon as he got back, he had Zhao Long bring him a map of the area outside the Great Wall.

After studying the map for a while, he pointed at a little valley barely five kilometers away.

“That’s the place!”

Looking a bit surprised, Zhao Long peered down at the valley, which seemed ordinary in every aspect, and was generally a place devoid of signs of life. In fact, he couldn’t think of any reason why Bai Xiaochun would be pointing it out.

“Colonel, what’s so special about that valley?” Zhao Long asked.

Waving his hand in a grand fashion, Bai Xiaochun replied, “According to the intelligence reports I have at my disposal, there’s an early Nascent Soul stage soulhorn deer that lives in that valley. Anyone who can kill that creature and turn in its soulhorn will receive a battle credit reward. Go post the mission immediately.”

“Huh?” Zhao Long said, confused. Soulhorn deer were native to the Wildlands. Not only were their horns valuable ingredients for medicines, but they could also be used as the primary component to make soulhorn bows. However, soulhorn deer usually gathered in locations where there were a lot of vengeful souls. Considering that the valley in question was only about five kilometers away from the Great Wall, there definitely weren’t any souls there, which mean that it would be impossible to find a soulhorn deer in the same location.

Besides, battles were constantly being fought near the Great Wall, so even if a soulhorn deer happened to end up in the valley, it

would quickly flee. After all, soulhorn deer weren't stupid, and definitely wouldn't choose a dangerous place like the Great Wall to settle down.

Most importantly, early Nascent Soul stage soulhorn deer were almost never found outside of the depths of the Wildlands....

After a brief moment of confused hesitation, Zhao Long looked over at Bai Xiaochun and said, "Um... Colonel, are you sure there's a soulhorn deer there? Also, major generals are the only ones who have the right to post missions. We--"

"Look, if I say there's a soulhorn deer there, then there is. Just put the mission briefing together and send it to the general." Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively.

Zhao Long smiled stiffly, clasped hands, and asked, "Very well, sir. How many battle credits is the reward?"

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and then said, "Well, it's a very dangerous mission that will be filled with countless dangers. The chances of making it back alive would be small. I guess the only option will be to post a handsome reward. Very well. Set it at 100,000,000 battle credits."

Zhao Long's jaw dropped, and he gasped loudly. However, it only took a moment before he realized what was going on, whereupon a strange look appeared in his eye.

"Oh right," Bai Xiaochun said, giving Zhao Long a very serious look, "don't forget to remind the general to let me know just before he posts the mission. We definitely can't have anyone else snatching it up!"

Zhao Long gave another stiff smile, nodded, then hurried away. As he went along, he couldn't help but envy Bai Xiaochun's ability to embezzle so brazenly. Soon, he reached Bai Lin, where he reported in officially and then handed over the mission briefing.

When Bai Lin took the jade slip and looked at it closely, then saw

that the reward was 100,000,000 battle credits, his eyes went wide and he almost threw the jade slip on the ground.

“This is highway robbery! If he wants battle credits, that’s fine, but he can’t be so obvious about it! A soulhorn deer in valley five kilometers away, and at the early Nascent Soul stage?! And then he has the nerve to put a reward of 100,000,000 battle credits!?” Bai Lin wasn’t sure whether to laugh or cry. However, considering that he hadn’t been able to convince the sect to exempt Bai Xiaochun from mission duty, he couldn’t simply refuse to post the mission. After a bit of thought, he reduced the reward from 100,000,000 to 1,000,000, then sent it to the pagoda in the center of the city.

Even a reward of 1,000,000 was still significant, and would be enough for an ordinary soldier to get a promotion to captain.

“The brat’s getting a lucky break this time.” Bai Lin posted the mission a bit begrudgingly. After all, since it was a Skin Flayers mission, which meant that the reward would come from the Skin Flayers’ coffers. Nonetheless, he posted the mission, sending a message to Bai Xiaochun right before it went public.

As soon as the mission appeared in the listings at the pagoda, it was noticed, causing quite a commotion to break out.

“A mission for 1,000,000 battle credits! Heavens! Quick, get it!”

“What... what mission is that? It’s in valley five kilometers away? An early Nascent Soul stage soulhorn deer? How... how is that even possible?!”

“I want that mission!” All of the cultivators who saw the mission instantly tried to do everything they could to be the ones to get their hands on it.

However, none of them were a match for Bai Xiaochun. He had been waiting for the mission to be posted, and had also received advanced notice from Bai Lin. Almost as soon as the mission

showed up, he accepted it, and then swaggered away under the envious gazes of those around him.

“Trying to steal my mission, huh?” he thought. “I was the one who made the mission! Even if you got it, you still wouldn’t find a soulhorn deer in that valley!” Feeling very pleased with himself, he peeked into his bag of holding, where he happened to have some soulhorns that he had requested as ingredients for concocting Soul Convergence Pills. One of them was clearly from an early Nascent Soul stage soulhorn deer.

“All I have to do is go over to that valley with my identity medallion in hand, then come back and turn in the mission.” It was quite a stimulating feeling to be able to utilize one’s power and connections to be able to earn battle credits in such an open and above-board way.

However, despite feeling so pleased with how things were going, he was still very cautious about going outside of the Great Wall. After much thought, he decided that he definitely couldn’t take any risks.

“Even though it’s only five kilometers away, I can’t just casually head over by myself. I definitely need to bring some people with me.” He was absolutely convinced that this would be the best course of action, although he wasn’t sure if it made sense to bring his entire 1,000-man regiment along.

On the other hand, bringing too few people would be too dangerous. In the end, he gritted his teeth and murmured to himself, “I don’t care about how it looks. Safety is the priority. I’m bringing all 1,000 of them with me!” Having made his decision, he quickly passed down orders to his subordinates, making it clear that they weren’t to spread word of the matter.

None of them questioned Bai Xiaochun or what he was doing. He was their colonel, and had also saved all of their lives. Therefore, all Bai Xiaochun had to do was point in a direction, and they would

fight with bloodthirsty ferocity!

It also helped that Bai Xiaochun had always treated them fairly. He had even spent his own battle credits to equip them with plenty of armor and magical items. He had also passed out a lot of medicinal pills that he himself had concocted. As a result, his regiment was better equipped and prepared for battle than most others in the legions.

After a few days of preparation, it came time to go out on the mission. That night, the moon wasn't very bright, and the lands were blanketed in darkness. The regiment dressed in disguises to make their passage outside the Great Wall easier, and then prepared to leave.

Everyone in the regiment had been stationed at the Great Wall for years, and were very familiar with how soul cultivators operated. Furthermore, they were all acquainted with the lands bordering Great Wall City. By disguising themselves as soul cultivators, complete with a few vengeful souls on display, they would definitely be less noticeable on the outside.

The only way their disguises would be pierced would be if some extremely powerful expert came along, or if they were forced to use a divine ability that required spiritual power.

After all, there was little fundamental difference between ordinary cultivators and soul cultivators. The main distinction was that the former used spiritual energy, while the latter used soul power.

The thousand members of the regiment didn't go out in battle formation. Rather, they scattered and headed out one by one. However, all it would take would be a single word from Bai Xiaochun, and they would all group back together.

After making all the arrangements for his subordinates, Bai Xiaochun nervously put on his own disguise, then gritted his teeth and went out beyond the wall.

Outside, he reached up to feel his face, and realized that he still didn't feel at ease. Therefore, he patted his bag of holding to produce a large bucket of water, which was full to the brim with Heavenspan River water. Inside of that water was a semitransparent mask made from flesh, the very same mask he had acquired from imposter Nightcrypt. That mask could change one's appearance and aura, and even the fluctuations of one's life force.

"There are some mysterious things about this mask, but at the moment, I absolutely have to hide my appearance and aura.

"I need to seize the moment! Go to the valley, come back, and then everything will be over.

"Besides, it's not like I'm going to run into some Wildlands army in a little valley five kilometers from the Great Wall. Things shouldn't be too dangerous."

With that, he took the mask out of the Heavenspan River water and put it onto his face. Instantly, his appearance changed. No longer was he a young man, but instead, a sallow-faced, middle-aged soul cultivator. Furthermore, his spiritual power fluctuations vanished, to be replaced by intense, rippling soul power.

As of this moment, he looked exactly like a soul cultivator!

It was only at this point that he finally started to feel comfortable, and began to speed across the lands under the darkness of night. The light of the waning moon made it just possible to see the shadows cast by the boulders that littered the landscape, as well as bones of the dead....

The occasional lonely soul could be seen floating through the air, and every once in a while, carrion-eating beasts would lift their heads to look around.

Chapter 511: They Can't See Me!

It was late in the night, and the dim moon cast a pale, fragmented light over the lands. Coupled with the patchy clouds, it made everything murky and difficult to see. The occasional cries of various beasts could be heard, along with the wails of lonely souls that drifted to and fro.

This was not Bai Xiaochun's first time outside the Great Wall, but the last time, he had been in the middle of a battle, whereas this time, he was out alone, and that was terrifying. After all, despite being in the great circle of Core Formation, he was still a bit leery of ghosts and souls.

He wasn't afraid of them as much as he had been in the past, mostly because of his years serving at the Great Wall, and his deeper understanding of the Wildlands.

Although he hadn't seen everything there was to see in the world, he had seen enough that he didn't fear the specters of the dead like he had in the past.

As he sped along through the night, it was impossible not to notice the skeletons of savage giants sticking up from the soil. Sighing, he thought, "The whole reason I got into immortal cultivation to begin with was because I want to live forever. Who would ever have thought that my path would bring me to a place like this?"

Shaking his head, he proceeded along, contemplating how fate liked to drag people down all sorts of different paths, paths they might never have intended to walk.

Another moment passed, and he cleared his mind of such thoughts and focused on being careful. He even slowed down a bit. By this point, he was about three or four kilometers away from the Great Wall, and more and more souls were becoming visible. Although the amount of souls was nothing compared to the soul

tide that would fill the area during battles, there were still enough of them that Bai Xiaochun had to be extra careful.

Most of the lone souls weren't humanoid in shape, but were spheres of mist that pulsed with icy coldness. Occasionally, they would converge together into the form of beasts or vicious spirits that would then pounce on the carrion-eating animals in the area.

Some of the souls would burrow into the corpses lying on the ground, as if attempting to possess them. However, most of the corpses in the area were too old and stiff, making such efforts fruitless.

As Bai Xiaochun moved forward, he was careful to give any souls he saw a wide berth. It wasn't that he couldn't handle them in a fight, but rather, that there was no need to do so. There were too few of them, and they were too low quality for him to even care about. Besides, if a fight broke out, it could attract attention, and perhaps cause other problems. If there had been enough souls that it would be worth it to attack and collect them, he might have thought about it. But right now, it wouldn't be worth it.

Eventually, when he was only about half a kilometer away from the little valley that was his destination, his eyes began to shine as he looked up ahead of him.

"That's quite a large number of souls." From what he could see, there were over a thousand random souls flying about, occasionally letting out shrill cries. Normally speaking, there wouldn't be so many souls in this area. However, because of Bai Xiaochun's Soul Convergence Pills, many of the souls in the attacking forces had fled and scattered, to gather in places like this.

"More than a thousand souls would be a good bit of battle credit." Starting to get a bit excited, he inched forward, then pulled out a Soul Convergence Pill, quickly disabled the explosion effect, and threw it forward with all his might. The pill became a bright beam of light that landed right in the middle of the flock of souls, where

it shattered, unleashing a gravitational force that quickly sucked in all of the more than 1,000 souls.

Then Bai Xiaochun rushed over, grabbed the soul sphere and giddily tossed it into his bag of holding. After looking around to confirm that he hadn't attracted any unwanted attention, he proceeded toward the valley.

The moment he entered the valley, he realized that there were a few hundred souls inside, and his delight grew.

"Who would have thought that I would make a bit of extra profit on this little venture?" As of this moment, he was pleased with how lucky he had gotten, and how smoothly things were going.

After glancing around the valley one more time, he pulled out another Soul Convergence Pill, and was just preparing to throw it out when all of a sudden, his heart trembled. Eyes sparkling with vigilance, he turned to look over his shoulder.

Behind him, a cloud of red mist was billowing out of the ground. However, it didn't seem to see Bai Xiaochun, and flew right past him into the valley.

That red mist was a soul that, upon entering the valley, took the form of a vicious bird head, which then began to attack and consume the other souls in the valley.

"It's at the Nascent Soul level!" Bai Xiaochun exclaimed to himself. As the soul in question attacked and consumed the other souls, its red color grew brighter, causing Bai Xiaochun to lick his lips.

Souls of that level weren't as valuable as deva beast souls, but were still worth quite a bit of battle credit. However, Bai Xiaochun was still a bit hesitant.

"Logically speaking, that soul should have attacked me first. Why didn't it? Maybe... it can't see me?" Something about the situation seemed very strange, so he carefully took a few steps forward into

the valley. However, not a single soul in the valley even looked his way.

In fact, some of them even flew right past him as they attempted to flee the Nascent Soul-level soul.

“They really can’t see me?” he thought. Both surprised and emboldened, he hurried further into the valley and looked around at the souls flying everywhere, his eyes shining more brightly by the moment. Finally, he reached out with his hand, grabbed one of the passing souls and threw it into his bag of holding.

Not even the crimson Nascent Soul-level soul seemed to be paying attention to him, and was simply going around attacking other souls.

Before long, there were almost no souls left other than the crimson one, and by that point, Bai Xiaochun was fully convinced that the souls couldn't see him. Heart pounding, he reached up and felt his face to confirm that he was wearing his mask.

“Last time I was on the battlefield, the souls could definitely see me. But this time they can’t. It must be... because of this mask!” Then, oh so carefully, he reached up and took the mask off.

The instant it left his face, the crimson soul suddenly shivered and turned to stare straight at him. Then it opened its mouth, apparently preparing to scream and pounce on him.

However, before it could make a noise, Bai Xiaochun quickly put the mask back on. The crimson soul seemed surprised, but quickly closed its mouth and then began searching around the valley, apparently looking for traces of whoever it was it had just seen.

Seeing all this happen caused Bai Xiaochun’s excitement to grow.

“What a goldmine!! I can’t believe the mask can do this too! It's a good thing I didn’t get rid of it back then.” With that, he walked up to the confused crimson soul, and before it even realized what was happening, reached out with lightning-like speed, grabbed it, and

threw it into his bag of holding.

“Got it! This mask is like a precious treasure for collecting souls. If I use it with my Soul Convergence Pills, I should be able to get enough battle credits to become a major general in no time!” The more he thought about the prospect, the more excited he got. He quickly walked the length of the valley to make sure that his mission could be counted as having been accomplished, then looked up to see that dawn was nearing. Walking out of the valley, he decided that since he was invisible to souls, and also had about a thousand subordinates shadowing him, that he was actually in a very safe position.

Unless a huge army of savages showed up all of a sudden, he wasn't really in any danger at all.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he made a decision.

“It would be a big pity to go back right now. Since I'm outside the wall already, I might as well take the time to collect a few souls for battle credit.”

Chapter 512: Bring It On! Who Dares To Make A Move!?

Having made his decision, Bai Xiaochun did his best to keep his excitement under control as he sped off into the distance. This time, instead of avoiding all of the random souls, he would walk right up to them and then grab them with the swish of a sleeve.

The entire time, not a single soul noticed him at all.

“Hahaha! Now this is how to get battle credit!” As he went along, he didn’t let a single soul escape.

His collection continued to increase, especially when he ran into larger groups of souls, which was when he would walk right into the middle of them and crush a Soul Convergence Pill in his hand. With a whoosh, all of the souls would then be sucked into his bag of holding.

“So sick! This mask is the key to dominating the Wildlands!” Over the course of the next four hours, he continued to move about to and fro picking up souls, until he had well over 10,000. Unfortunately, that was the best he could do without running into a truly large group of souls.

As for his subordinates who were shadowing him, ready to jump out and protect him at any time, many of them saw him going around collecting the souls, and were somewhat surprised, but took it in as a matter of course.

From their perspective, Bai Xiaochun was the bane of vengeful souls, and therefore, virtually nothing he did with regard to them would be very surprising.

Time passed. Eventually, the light of dawn was spreading out across the sky, and Bai Xiaochun was more than a hundred kilometers away from the Great Wall. By this point, he was almost completely beyond the area that could be considered the

battlefield, and was truly in the Wildlands.

All sorts of strange rock formations and ferocious plants could be seen, as well as the occasional beast. He even saw a few savages.

At one point, Bai Xiaochun caught sight of a soul cultivator in the mountains off to the distance, chasing after a beast of some sort.

This soul cultivator didn't look much like the ones he had seen on the battlefield. He wore ordinary clothing, and wasn't very handsome. Based on his aura, he seemed to be in the Core Formation stage, except that the soul power fluctuations coming off of him were not pure, but rather, heterogeneous...

A few years before, Bai Xiaochun wouldn't have known what to make of this soul cultivator. But as a colonel of the five legions, he had access to intelligence reports that gave him a much deeper understanding of the Wildlands.

The soul cultivators in the Wildlands were not united, and in fact grouped together in all sorts of different organizations. There were even some soul cultivators who didn't belong to any organization, and were like rogue cultivators.

The most powerful forces in the Wildlands were gathered in metropolises called 'cities of the kings'. There was even one city that bore the 'imperial' designation. The forces who occupied such cities were the ones who fielded the huge armies, and were the home of the type of soul cultivators he had seen before on the field of battle.

However, people like that were actually the minority. Most soul cultivators were scattered, and did not belong to powerful organizations. Most of the time, they came from small groups that controlled tiny bits of territory in random places. As for the soul cultivator with the heterogeneous soul power Bai Xiaochun was looking at now, he was obviously one of those types.

When Bai Xiaochun realized how far away he was from the Great

Wall, he stopped and decided that it would be best to end his mission and go back.

Just as he was turning around, though, a muffled boom could be heard from the mountains off in the distance. A cloud of dust shot up into the air as one of the mountains actually collapsed, transforming into something like a crater.

Revealed within that crater was a huge group of souls that almost instantly began to fly out in all directions. Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped.

"What's going on?" he thought. Almost immediately, other savages and soul cultivators in the area noticed that something strange was going on. When they saw all of the souls suddenly flying out, they began to rush in the direction of the crumbled mountain to try to grab some of them.

To Bai Xiaochun, souls were essentially battle credit, but they were just as valuable to the Wildlanders. Not only could they be used as weapons to attack the Great Wall, but they were also useful for cultivation in a place where there was no energy of heaven and earth.

Also, anyone who could get their hands on souls could turn around and sell them to necromancers, who would use them not only for cultivation, but to create soul medicine.

Furthermore, the areas of the Wildlands closer to the Great Wall would often have more souls because of all the people who died in battle. It was for that very reason that there were giants and soul cultivators lurking around in the area, hoping to collect more souls than was possible in other areas.

Looking around, Bai Xiaochun could see at least a few dozen savage giants and more than ten soul cultivators, all rushing forward to fight over the souls.

"There must be tens of thousands of them...." Bai Xiaochun

thought. As for the group which was rushing forward to compete over the souls, not a single one was in the Nascent Soul stage. They were all in Foundation Establishment or Core Formation, with the three strongest of them being in the great circle of Core Formation. Therefore, he didn't hesitate to rush forward along with them, grabbing souls with every step he took.

“Mine! They're all mine!”

The savages and soul cultivators had no idea who Bai Xiaochun was, and assumed he was just another soul cultivator. However, it didn't take long before they realized that he was grabbing more souls than everyone else. In fact, he was getting about half of them.

Then, it became apparent that, as he moved about, none of the souls were reacting to him. He would simply reach out and grab them, in quite a contrast to all the effort they were putting forth.

For those who were in Foundation Establishment, there was little they could do about it, but for the handful who were in the great circle of Core Formation, it didn't take long for their eyes to flicker with fury and killing intent.

“Where did this monkey come from? He's so fast!”

“Dammit, he's single-handedly grabbing more souls than all of us put together? Does he have a death wish or something?!”

One of them was an old man in nondescript clothing, whose eyes glittered with violet light. Although there were three soul cultivators in the great circle, the other two seemed to be following this one's lead as they all turned to look at Bai Xiaochun with coldly glittering eyes.

There were no formal rules in the Wildlands, where the fittest survived, and the law of the jungle prevailed above all. In the end, strength was the most important. When Bai Xiaochun saw the group of three staring at him, he stopped in place, narrowed his eyes, and looked back at them angrily, his murderous aura on full

display.

If any of them had been in the Nascent Soul stage, he would never have done such a thing, but since they were only in the great circle of Core Formation, how could he possibly fear them?

That was even more the case considering that he had a thousand subordinates not too far off. All it would take would be a single order, and they would rush over to help him. Therefore, not only was Bai Xiaochun not afraid, he was actually feeling a bit arrogant at the moment. Glaring viciously, and looking very much like he was on the verge of attacking with full force, he roared, “Bring it on! Who dares to make a move on me!?”

None of the savages or soul cultivators had attacked him to begin with because of his fear-inspiring speed. Now, he looked like some sort of fiendish devil, the type who was used to vicious fighting. Therefore, the old man simply snorted coldly, ignored him, and proceeded on toward the crater.

The other Core Formation experts did the same, and as for the other soul cultivators and savages in the Foundation Establishment level, they obviously had no intention of provoking him. All of them just continued on toward the crater in the hopes of lucking out and getting some souls.

Seeing this, Bai Xiaochun chuckled darkly, and then let out a few cold harrumphs.

“So, they do realize how awesome Lord Bai is. Guess they have some sense after all!” Sticking his chin up, he looked very much like the kind of person who was unparalleled under heaven and could crush anyone in front of him in battle. At this point, he couldn’t just leave and go back to the Great Wall, so he clasped his hands behind his back and headed toward the crater.

As he got closer to the crater, he was finally able to spot a cave mouth at the bottom of it. That was where all the souls were emerging from. Surprisingly, some of them were even crimson,

indicating that they were at the Nascent Soul-level.

“How could there be so many souls?!” Elated, he leaped forward and began to collect one soul after another. When the soul cultivators and savages in the area saw him snatching so many souls right out from under their noses, their killing intent continued to grow stronger.

Pursing his lips to suppress his laughter, Bai Xiaochun envisioned what it would be like if they attacked him, and then he suddenly called a thousand cultivators to his side to fight for him. The mere thought of the grandiose spectacle got him so excited he started hoping they would actually attack him.

“Come on, hurry up and make a move!” he thought. With that, he picked up speed in collecting souls, focusing on those which were in the Nascent Soul level.

Moments later, the old man in the great circle of Core Formation suddenly grinned in terrifying fashion. All of a sudden, a black mist poured out of him, transforming into the shape of a huge skull around him. Then he began to walk toward Bai Xiaochun.

However, in that very moment, an intense rumble that far surpassed any sound from before rose up from the crater.

RUMBLE!

Chapter 513: This Soul Is For Giant Ghost King!

The sudden, intense rumbling was quite startling, both to the old man and to Bai Xiaochun. That was not to mention the other savages and soul cultivators in the area. Before anyone could react, a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering shockwave erupted from within the crater.

As a result, everyone, regardless of the level of their cultivation base, was violently thrown backward. In fact, some who were in the Foundation Establishment level were ripped to shreds, with even their souls being destroyed in the process.

Bai Xiaochun was left gasping, and everyone else was shocked to the core.

“What’s going on!?”

“First the mountain collapsed into a crater, and now the crater is falling apart. This....”

“Don’t tell me that some powerful magical treasure is coming into the world!!”

Even as the cries of astonishment began to ring out, a gravitational force erupted from within the crater that didn’t affect anyone in the area except for the countless scattering souls. Instantly, they began to tremble as they were sucked back into the crater.

At the same time, shocking roars began to emanate from the crater, causing Bai Xiaochun’s mind to reel from the incredible, shocking force contained within it.

Everyone reacted in such a way, with the exception of the old man. His eyes suddenly flickered with disbelief, and he even began to tremble in excitement.

“That’s... that’s....” Even before the man could finish his sentence, another intense rumbling sound echoed out, accompanied by a ball of white mist that shot up into the air. Just barely visible within that mist was a golden blur that appeared to be some entity trying to fly up into the heavens!

Only a moment later, the golden entity within the mist became clear, which was none other than a golden crocodile!

At the same time, a metal-type aura erupted out, causing rippling fluctuations that both Bai Xiaochun and everyone else instantly recognized.

“A deva beast soul!!” The savages and soul cultivators began to cry out in shock, and their eyes instantly burned with madness and greed. Of course, those who were merely in the Foundation Establishment level began to back away, aware that they didn’t qualify to compete for something like this, at least not do so and stay alive.

The savages and soul cultivators who were in the Core Formation level were going mad with glee. As powerful experts of the Wildlands, they lived in an impoverished place where fighting for resources was the natural order of things. Rewards come only with risk, and that was a virtual instinct for people like this.

Deva beast souls were rare, something that some people might never even see in their entire life. Just catching sight of one could be considered good fortune for some.

The sudden and unexpected appearance of one right here led everyone present to go wild with anticipation.

Without any hesitation, everyone present shot directly toward the golden crocodile!

Although the golden crocodile seemed confused, almost like a newborn creature without much intelligence, it quickly realized that a whole group was bearing down on it with the desire to take

it.

Booms could even be heard as some of the Core Formation soul cultivators and savages began to fight each other. Clearly, a large number of them were actually from the same organization, and were teaming up to beat away the rogue soul cultivators.

As for the three who were in the great circle of Core Formation, they were virtually invincible, and quickly began to close in on the deva beast soul. Although the deva beast soul hadn't fully regained its senses, its instincts were still there, and it quickly began to back up.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were wide, and his mind was spinning. He actually possessed deva souls, but this was his first time seeing a deva beast soul. Despite being less rare than deva souls, they were still astronomically valuable, and if he could turn it in for battle credit, it would count for nearly thirty percent of what he needed to get a promotion to major general.

Therefore, it was no surprise that his excitement instantly built to a frenzy.

"That belongs to me!!" he roared, unleashing all the speed he could to blast toward the deva beast soul. In the blink of an eye, he was in the crowd of soul cultivators, waving his sleeve to unleash blasts of power and knock people out of his way.

Although he was actually using spiritual power, the mask made it seem like soul power, and revealed absolutely no clues about the truth. Screams rang out as the soul cultivators were hit with power, causing blood to spray out of their mouths as they looked over in confused terror at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was like an explosive dragon, holding nothing back as he battled his way forward. Soon, he was almost upon the deva beast soul, which would normally cause it to flee in the opposite direction. And yet it didn't even seem to notice him.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased at that, and was well aware that the beast couldn't see him because of his mask. Laughing heartily, he reached out to grab the soul. However, that was when the old soul cultivator madly shouted, "Heed my command and block this monkey! I want that soul as a gift for Giant Ghost King!"

The enraged old man's hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture. At the same time, the others under his command recklessly charged forward to block Bai Xiaochun's path, their eyes glowing red with madness.

This was the combined attack of more than ten people, two of them in the great circle of Core Formation, four in late Core Formation, and the rest in the early and mid stages.

However, despite all of that, they weren't a match at all for Bai Xiaochun, and were incapable of preventing his advance. And yet, their wild charge did have the effect of frightening the deva beast soul.

The soul couldn't see Bai Xiaochun, but could see the others, and immediately began to flee. As a result, Bai Xiaochun snatched nothing but air, after which he was struck by the divine abilities and magical techniques launched by the more than ten soul cultivators.

Bai Xiaochun was shaken, but not hurt, and yet could do nothing other than watch as the deva beast soul fled. At the same time, the old soul cultivator tossed out a glowing red sphere, which was a magical treasure specifically designed to capture souls. As soon as it left his hand, it transformed into a huge net which neatly wrapped up the fleeing deva beast soul.

Enraged, Bai Xiaochun unleashed the power of a Frigid Paragon in a blast toward the ten Core Formation soul cultivators.

In the blink of an eye, they were transformed into lifeless statues of ice as the entire 30,000-meter area became a frigid domain!

The old man was scared out of his mind. How could he ever have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would be so terrifying? In this moment of crisis, all he could do was grab his net and then slap his hand down onto the crown of his head, causing a statue of a giant ghost to appear.

It had two horns, green skin, and the faces of countless vengeful souls bulging out from its skin. Not only did it look matchlessly vicious, but it radiated a terrifying fleshly body power. As for its eyes, they glowed red, as if the statue had just climbed up out of the underworld! This statue depicted something completely and utterly legendary, something that existed above berserk ghosts. This was a giant ghost!

As the statue flew out, it radiated green light, as well as a sinister, murderous aura that seemed to contain fluctuations of the Deva Realm.

Because of that murderous aura, Bai Xiaochun's Frigid Paragon domain suddenly slowed, giving the old man just enough time to flee with the deva beast soul.

Even still, he was covered with ice and coughing up blood. Clearly, his blood and internal organs had been negatively affected, and yet he still managed to shout, "I'm the seventh apprentice of Marquis Lan, direct subordinate of Giant Ghost King! I'm here on a mission! How dare you injure me!!"

The old man could see how much danger he was in, and how furious Bai Xiaochun was. Trembling inwardly, he pointed down at the statue of the giant ghost, which began to rumble loudly. Then, fifty shadowy figures burst out from inside, which transformed into fifty savage giants. All of them had expressionless faces and glowing red eyes, and quickly began to grow until they were fully 30 meters tall. Based on the powerful fleshly body fluctuations rolling off of them, they were all in the Core Formation level.

Most shocking of all was that they wore matching armor engraved with images of giant ghosts! Because of that armor, they were even more powerful than they would have been normally. Furthermore, they were arranged in a formation designed to protect the old man!

Protected from the frigid qi, the old man breathed a sigh of relief as he continued to speed away, and even had a bit of killing intent flickering in his eyes as he looked back at Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 514: I'm An Army Officer, Fool!

There was no way Bai Xiaochun couldn't be startled by the sudden appearance of more than fifty savage giants. He had been impressed with the statue to begin with, but this new development left his eyes flickering. Then he heard how the old man referred to himself, and realized that this was no ordinary soul cultivator.

Furthermore, these giants were different from the other savages Bai Xiaochun had seen in battle. Although giants in the armies he had seen were numerous, and abounded with killing intent, they were very similar to the rogue soul cultivators he had seen. They were disorganized and unable to work together. These fifty giants he was facing right now were clearly different.

There was something even colder about their demeanor, and the madness lurking within them caused Bai Xiaochun's pupils to constrict. Clearly, these giants practiced some special type of cultivation that made them elite among their savage compatriots.

Even their armor was beyond ordinary, and capable of defending them against his Frigid Paragon powers. Plus, the power of their formation was such that they could easily protect the old man as he fled. Simultaneously, when the power of that formation reached its pinnacle, it thrummed with an energy similar to the spell formation giants of the River-Defying Sect!

That was a power similar to the cultivation base of a Nascent Soul expert!

Of even more concern to Bai Xiaochun was the giant ghost statue, which contained a bit of deva-level defense power. Even if he managed to use his Frigid Paragon powers to freeze all of the elite savages in place, it was the power of a deva that formed the nexus of the spell formation.

"So, is this the true power of the Wildlands...?" he thought. Over the course of the battles he had fought with the Wildlands armies,

he had slowly come to look down upon them. But now, such feelings were fading away.

Within the spell formation, the old man's eyes glittered with killing intent. "How dare you attack me after I revealed my identity. Do you have a death wish or something?!"

Although he was a bit intimidated by Bai Xiaochun's display of strength, he knew that if he didn't kill him, the enmity caused because of the stolen deva beast soul was not something that could be easily resolved at a later date.

Bai Xiaochun chuckled coldly. Staring the old man in the eye, he slowly said, "What's so impressive about ganging up on people? Do you have the guts to fight me in a duel?!"

In response, the old soul cultivator laughed as loudly as if he had just heard the funniest joke in the entire world. Eyes flaring with icy killing intent, he said, "Are you a moron or something? So what if I'm ganging up on you? What are you going to do about it?!"

With that, he lifted his right arm in preparation to give the order to kill Bai Xiaochun.

However, it was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun also started laughing. Lifting his chin up proudly, he suddenly revealed a jade slip, which he then crushed between his fingers.

"Fine. Ganging up it is. Come, my brothers!"

The old soul cultivator was taken aback by Bai Xiaochun's words. Then, sensing a change in the wind, he looked off into the distance.

Suddenly, dozens of beams of light appeared off in the distance to shoot toward them.

The old man laughed coldly. "Hmph. That's not very many peop-
_"

However, before he could finish his sentence, more beams of light appeared in a different direction. Rumbling sounds echoed out as, within the blink of an eye, dozens upon dozens of beams of light appeared, shooting through the air at blinding speed.

Within the briefest of moments, hundreds of beams of light could be seen!

The old man's face turned ashen, choking on his own breath and trembling physically. And yet, things weren't over yet. Hundreds more beams of light began to speed toward the area, causing the old man's defenses to begin to vibrate.

There were a thousand of them, causing the old soul cultivator's face to turn as white as a sheet of paper. Eyes wide, he began to pant with incredulity and disbelief.

“This... this is impossible!!”

He had no idea why so many people had been hiding in the area, nor was he sure how he had missed any signs of them. Most frightening of all was that, without fail, all of them were in the Core Formation stage!!

There were even quite a few who were in the same cultivation stage as himself, the great circle of Core Formation!

Feeling very dashing and spirited, Bai Xiaochun pointed at the old man and shouted, “Brothers, put this old man to death!”

“Die!!” shouted the thousand cultivators, pouring through the air like a grand army, causing intense rumbling sounds to fill the area as their murderous auras raged. These were top troops under the command of an intrepid officer, a sight which caused the old soul cultivator's mind to spin. Even more shocking was that the fifty savage giants gasped and began to back up. Not even they could possibly have dreamed that they would end up facing a huge number of cultivators in this place!

The old soul cultivator could immediately tell that if this group

massed together, there would be no way for him to make it out of the situation alive.

“Flee!!” he screamed. The fifty savage giants immediately drew upon the full power of the spell formation, which accelerated rapidly in an attempt to get the man outside of the closing net.

“Get him, boys!” Bai Xiaochun roared.

Although the spell formation was moving at incredible speed, these were cultivators of the five legions. Furthermore, they had gone through a life-or-death trial with Bai Xiaochun, and had been hand-picked from tens of thousands of other soldiers. Therefore, it was with murderous ferocity that they shot toward the fifty savage giants.

The majestic sight of a thousand of his men attacking fifty giants with deadly intent immediately got Bai Xiaochun’s blood boiling, so he shouted, “Fudge! How dare you steal my deva beast soul! Even worse, you actually went so far as to gang up on me!”

There was no way the fifty giants could last for long under such an attack. They fought back, roaring, and yet the thousand cultivators of Bai Xiaochun’s regiment were well-trained, and quickly fell into their own formations, which the giants were incapable of defending against.

As the giants were destroyed in spectacular fashion, the old soul cultivator trembled, clearly on the verge of tears because of the unfairness of the situation.

“You big bully!!” he screamed, his hair flying about wildly as the few surviving giants tried to force their way out of the situation. “What’s so impressive about ganging up on people? If you have what it takes, why don’t you fight me in a duel?!”

“Are you a moron or something?” Bai Xiaochun replied proudly, spitting the old man’s words right back at him. “So what if I’m ganging up on you? What are you going to do about it?!”

With that, he shot toward the old man with deadly force.

Soon, more bitter screams rang out.

By this point, all of the fifty giants were dead, most of them having chosen to go out in self-detonation. However, the resulting explosions were of little use. Bai Xiaochun had been prepared for that, and used his Frigid Paragon energy to dispel the force. As a result, not a single one of his men were killed!

Actually, if he had allowed his men to go all out, disregarding even their own safety, it would have been even easier to get rid of the fifty giants. However, he didn't do that. He wanted every single person that he took out of the Great Wall with him to get back safely!

As the last of the fifty giants died, the statue of the giant ghost above the old soul cultivator's head began to power up to attack.

But how could Bai Xiaochun possibly let that happen? Now that the old man was alone on the battlefield, Bai Xiaochun sped forward and lashed out with his palm. In the blink of an eye, a force like that of a mountain slapped into the enormous statue.

A boom could be heard, and blood sprayed out of the old man's mouth. As for the statue, it immediately began to spin downward toward the ground, clearly on the verge of collapsing.

"Get that statue!" Bai Xiaochun barked as he pursued the old man. "It's definitely a precious item!"

Some of his men immediately went to retrieve the giant ghost statue.

Meanwhile, the vengeful souls had all been sucked back into the crater, which had fully collapsed into an enormous, mist-filled pit.

The old man finally fell down out of the sky and landed at the edge of that pit, coughing up blood. Bitter laughter escaped his lips; the attack from just now had revealed to him how shockingly powerful his opponent really was. His five yin organs and six yang

organs were almost completely destroyed. His soul power was in chaos, and the flame of his life force was about to wink out.

“I'm the seventh apprentice of Marquis Lan, direct subordinate of Giant Ghost King! It doesn't matter where you're from, if you kill me, then you'll die for sure!!” Despairing, the old man made one last-ditch effort to frighten Bai Xiaochun.

However, even as the words escaped his lips, Bai Xiaochun appeared in front of him and reached out to grab his neck. Then he relieved him of the deva beast soul and said, “Who gives a crap about some Giant Ghost King? I'm an army officer, fool!” The disdain in his voice was clear as he laid some restrictive spells onto the old man and then tossed him over to some of the men in his regiment.

“Take him with us!”

Chapter 515: Be A Good Boy And Take The Medicinal Pill

When the old soul cultivator heard Bai Xiaochun call himself an army officer, his eyes went blank. Then, a moment later, his mind began to reel, and his face completely fell. He even forgot to breathe for a moment. Earlier, he had been confused as to why Bai Xiaochun would suddenly have a thousand men to back him up, and had assumed that he was from another of the powerful group of soul cultivators.

Fear of displeasing the organization led by Giant Ghost King might have been able to keep him alive. After all, Giant Ghost King was one of the four great kings of the Wildlands, and one of only five demigods. Therefore, few people would be willing to offend him.

But now that the old man realized that Bai Xiaochun was actually from the lands of Heavenspan, his eyes filled with despair. However, that only lasted for a moment, whereupon venomous hatred appeared. Before he could do anything else, though, Bai Xiaochun bopped him on the head.

“What are you so surprised about? And what is that look in your eye supposed to mean?!” Bai Xiaochun was clearly not very pleased with the man’s reaction. As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, he was actually being very merciful; most other people in his situation would have just killed the old man right off the bat.

Instead, he was a very kind person. Instead of killing him, he planned to take him back to the Great Wall and trade him in for battle credit. But then the man dared to give him a dirty look.

The old man gritted his teeth and cursed inwardly at his lack of options. Unless he wanted to die on the spot, he would just have to endure the situation. After all, considering his background as someone from Giant Ghost City, it was likely that he wouldn’t be

killed after being handed over to Great Wall City.

Sighing, he gritted his teeth and bowed his head.

Bai Xiaochun bopped him on the head again and then complacently said, “Yes, yes, that’s much better. Behave yourself, now!”

Feeling like a very grand figure, he was just about to flick his sleeve and withdraw his regiment back to the Great Wall, when all of a sudden, a chorus of piercing screams rang out from the mist inside the pit.

For some reason, those screams sounded familiar to Bai Xiaochun, as if they were coming out of the mouths of souls. Frightened, he backed up a few paces and then peered down into the pit.

The pit was so incredibly deep that, combined with the mist, it was impossible to see the bottom of it. In fact, not even divine sense could reach its end.

And yet, the screaming just now had clearly been coming from a large number of vengeful souls, perhaps even as many as 10,000 or more.

Even as Bai Xiaochun assessed the scene cautiously, grave expressions appeared on the faces of the cultivators of his regiment. Then, Zhao Long stepped forward and whispered, “Colonel, there’s something strange going on here. It almost seems like there’s some sort of natural restrictive magic in place. We should probably get going immediately.”

Bai Xiaochun agreed that there was something very odd about this place. First the mountain had collapsed into a crater, and then the crater had turned into a pit. Plus, there was that deva beast soul. All of those things had happened in a very short period of time. Plus, neither the Great Wall nor any of the savage tribes had sent anyone to investigate the matter.

It was almost as if nobody had been able to detect what was happening.

Bai Xiaochun's expression was just as grave as everyone else's as he nodded in agreement. But then he looked down into the mists, which were apparently filled with large numbers of souls, and couldn't help but think about how much of a pity it would be to just leave.

"That's a bunch of battle credit down there...." he murmured to himself. Opening his third eye, he rotated his cultivation base, which sent a beam of violet light out. Almost immediately, the power of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye began to dispel the mists.

Seeing that this method was working, he added some cultivation base power, which caused the mists to melt away at an even more rapid pace.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one who could see what was happening. The old soul cultivator and all of the men in his regiment could also see the mists vanishing.

Soon, the gaping pit was revealed. Although it was still impossible to see the bottom itself, it was possible to see innumerable souls floating around inside of it!

Even just at the entrance, there appeared to be more than 100,000 of them, with quite a few being at the Nascent Soul level. Considering how many there were, it was impossible to even guess how many the entire pit contained.

The number was essentially incalculable!

The scene was profoundly shocking to Bai Xiaochun, and caused the cultivators of his regiment to stare with wide eyes.

There were so many souls in sight now that, despite the fact that everyone in the regiment had Soul Convergence Pills, they could tell that if the souls all attacked them at once, they would definitely be killed. Furthermore, the rancor these souls emanated

surpassed that of ordinary souls, and made it clear that if they attacked together, it would be a situation of enormous danger.

As for the old soul cultivator, he was staring into the pit of souls, feeling completely shaken and unwilling to even move a muscle. He knew what kind of terrifying power that group of vengeful souls represented, and that if their attention was attracted, he wouldn't have to worry about the cultivators who had just captured him; the souls would rip his flesh apart as they consumed him and then possessed his body.

If he got taken back to the Great Wall, he might be a prisoner of war, but at least he would be alive. But if those souls took to action, then he would definitely be fated to die.

As a soul cultivator of the Wildlands, he was far too familiar with souls to do anything other than fear them in this situation.

Thankfully, the souls seemed to be in a state of partial hibernation, and weren't interested in leaving the pit. As long as they weren't riled up, they would likely stay put and not attack.

Everyone was shocked, and Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling. However, as he looked at the vengeful souls, he saw something a bit different than everyone else. He saw a huge amount of battle credit!

"If I could capture those souls, I could turn them all in for battle credit.... Look at how many of them there are! Heavens! Maybe becoming a major general isn't just a pipe dream after all!" His lips were pursed tight in excitement, and yet he was still feeling a bit hesitant. After all, the sheer number of souls meant that even with Soul Convergence Pills, it was still a very dangerous situation.

"The best thing would be to lure them out a bit at a time, or maybe split them up into groups...."

Although he had his mask to protect himself, he still wasn't comfortable relying completely on that to stay safe. On the other

hand, simply walking away would be a huge pity. After a bit of thought, he crept backward and quietly signaled for the rest of his regiment to do the same.

After they were a few hundred meters away from the edge of the pit, in a relatively safe location, Bai Xiaochun looked over with glittering eyes at the old soul cultivator he'd captured.

The old man had just been sighing in relief that they were moving away from the pit of souls when, all of a sudden, he realized that Bai Xiaochun was staring at him.

The old man's heart started to thump in his chest. He had the distinct premonition that whatever plans this Core Formation cultivator had for him, they definitely couldn't be good.

Before he could open his mouth to say something, Bai Xiaochun chuckled darkly, stepped forward, and patted the man on the shoulder.

"Listen, Fellow Daoist, why don't we forget about the matter of you trying to steal my deva beast soul? All you have to do is just do me a little favor. What do you say? It's nothing difficult. I'll simply give you a medicinal pill, then you walk into that big pit, and crush it. Remember, you can only crush it after you get into the pit. Alright? Simple!"

Then, it was with a very fervent and hopeful look in his eyes that he produced a Soul Convergence Pill and held it out.

The old man's mind spun, and he began to tremble as he looked at Bai Xiaochun. Seemingly on the verge of tears, he said, "Please let me off the hook, oh exalted one. I'm... I'm more than happy to become a prisoner of war. I have a lot of information about Giant Ghost City! I'm... I'm very valuable as a hostage!!"

"I know, I know. Come, come. Just be a good boy and take this medicinal pill." Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun forcibly opened the old man's hand and put the Soul Convergence Pill in his palm.

“Alright, off with you now.”

Starting to struggle, the old man loudly said, “I’m not going anywhere! You might as well just kill me! Forget it!”

Bai Xiaochun was clearly very displeased.

“If you refuse,” he said angrily, “then I’ll have my men rough you up a bit and then throw you inside! Look, you’re gonna go into that pit whether you want to or not!” Instantly, the surrounding cultivators of Bai Xiaochun’s regiment began to stare at the old man with cold killing intent.

The old man was trembling in fear, and simultaneously bristling with rage. However, he could tell that he was out of options. If he didn’t do as he was asked, then it was obvious that this fiendish killer would toss him headfirst into the pit of souls anyway.

Gritting his teeth helplessly, the old man closed his hand around the medicinal pill. Then, he threw caution to the wind as he began to creep forward to the edge of the pit.

In the same moment that he began to move forward, Bai Xiaochun and his regiment fell back until they were 3,000 meters away. There, they prepared to run away at top speed if necessary.

Only at that point did Bai Xiaochun finally turn to look back at the old man as he prepared to dive into the pit.

Chapter 516: Kill Me First!

The old man's face was a mask of grief, and his heart was filled with ceaseless venomous curses toward Bai Xiaochun. Even though he realized that he was holding a Soul Convergence Pill, he hadn't yet made any connection to Bai Xiaochun himself. After all, while not every single cultivator in the five legions was armed with Soul Convergence Pills, enough were that they could be considered common.

“Damned monkey! You're definitely not going to die a good death!!” Gritting his teeth, he edged closer to the pit, where he looked back to see Bai Xiaochun and the other cultivators waiting nervously, clearly ready to flee at a moment's notice. Immediately, the old man's heart filled with disgust.

And yet, he had no other options in front of him. If he did as Bai Xiaochun asked, maybe he would get out of the situation alive. But if he caused problems, he could theoretically revel in the thought of his captors being killed, but he himself would also perish.

As he stood there at the edge of the pit wavering back and forth about what to do, Bai Xiaochun impatiently cried out in a hushed voice, “Hurry up! We're all waiting on you!”

Yeah, well keep waiting, bitch! the old man cursed inwardly. Clenching his jaw, he toed the edge of the pit, and was just preparing to jump in when the vengeful souls inside suddenly stopped floating around and then turned to look at him.

The old man's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode, and his mind was spinning into a complete blank. Finally, he let out a shout and simultaneously crushed the medicinal pill. Before any of the souls could do anything, a massive gravitational force sprang out.

Instantly, more than 10,000 vengeful souls were sucked up, without even a chance to fight back. In the blink of an eye, they

became a soul sphere, which the soul cultivator grabbed. However, the other vengeful souls were now riled up, and began howling, even the ones in the depths of the pit. Then, they began to pour out into the open like a massive tempest.

The old soul cultivator shrieked as he spun around and began to flee. Behind him, a cloud of souls rose up into the air, tens upon tens of thousands of them.

“Help me!” the old man shrieked as he fled. Feeling angrier than ever at Bai Xiaochun and his men, he headed straight in their direction.

The old man was quick, but Bai Xiaochun was quicker. In almost the same moment that the old man crushed the Soul Convergence Pill, he and his men began to flee in the opposite direction.

The old man saw this, but had no other option than to push forward with greater speed. Sadly, his cultivation base had already been sealed and limited, making things very difficult. Behind him, a sea of souls bore down, their howls echoing out in all directions.

The sensation of deadly crisis that filled him, and the despair, made it so that the old man couldn’t hold back his curses.

“You won’t die a good death, you monkey! If I become a ghost, I’ll haunt you to the end of your days!!”

The cultivators were trembling at what they saw, and Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding as he fled. As he looked over his shoulder, what he focused on was not the old man, but the huge sea of souls.

“1,000,000... no, wait, 10,000,000... no wait.... Heavens, how many souls are there!?!?” Bai Xiaochun’s scalp was tingling in terror as he pushed forward with greater speed. As for the old man, there was no time to pay any attention to him, which Bai Xiaochun felt a bit bad about. After all, it was his own greed which had put the man in this situation.

Even as he smiled bitterly, his expression suddenly flickered, and he looked over his shoulder again to see the old soul cultivator howling as he fled from the souls. But then, after the souls reached a position several hundred meters away from the edge of the pit, they suddenly stopped giving chase. Instead, they flew back up into the sky and then circled back toward the pit, where they vanished. Moments later, everything was quiet again.

Bai Xiaochun looked on in shock, as did the other cultivators. As for the old man, he felt like he had just survived a deadly catastrophe, and was looking around with incredulous delight.

“I'm... I'm not dead!!” he muttered as tears of joy streamed down his face. However, before he could even calm down from the thrill of having survived, Bai Xiaochun walked up and gave him an appraising glance.

The old man suddenly went stiff with anxiety. Considering that he was completely surrounded by Bai Xiaochun's forces, it was obvious that he couldn't escape, and all of a sudden, the old man thought back to the curses he had just been uttering. Without any hesitation, he handed the soul sphere over to Bai Xiaochun.

“Exalted one, I--” However before he could continue with any explanation, Bai Xiaochun began to walk around him slowly, poking and prodding him a bit here and there. The old man's anxiety quickly mounted.

“They didn't chase you very far, did they?” Bai Xiaochun said. “Don't tell me it's because of some secret of yours?” After circling the man a few times without finding anything out of the ordinary, still seemed suspicious. “Alright, how about this. Considering that the souls don't seem inclined to chase you, why don't we do a little experiment...?”

With that, he produced another Soul Convergence Pill and handed it to the old man.

In response to Bai Xiaochun's words, the old man nearly

exploded. Eyes going wide, he was unable to suppress his rage as he yelled, “No! Fudge, I don’t care if you tell your men to skin me alive, there’s no way I’m going!! Kill me first!!”

The old man really was angry. Earlier, he had been staring death in the face, the result of which was that he was now hovering on the verge of mental collapse, and even hysteria.

The surrounding cultivators didn’t feel bad for the man at all. Furthermore, they realized that if the man really would rather die than do as requested, then it would be virtually impossible to force him to help them. Therefore, a few of the cultivators stepped forward with clasped hands.

“Colonel, allow me to go test things out!”

“Let me go, Colonel!”

“Colonel, this experiment was made for me!”

Bai Xiaochun could immediately tell that these cultivators were trying to return the kindness he had shown them. However, there was no way he would agree. After all, he was most likely in the safest position of them all with his mask.

Looking over at the pit, he gritted his teeth and said, “Stand down, all of you.” Then he glared at the old man. “And as for you, what are you yelling for? Boy do you have a loud voice.”

With the wave of a hand, he bound the man up again and then tossed him back to his subordinates. With that, he looked at the pit for a moment before walking toward it.

Zhao Long and some of the others were just about to try to persuade him not to go, but he was too quick. Even as he flew toward the pit, his voice echoed back into their ears.

“Get back and wait for me.” When Bai Xiaochun arrived at the edge of the pit, his heart was gripped with anxiety and indecision. Further back, the cultivators of his regiment were waiting nervously, in contrast to the old soul cultivator, who was

chuckling coldly and cursing inwardly.

“I’m a Wildlands soul cultivator, and probably do have some of the aura of Giant Ghost City on me. Those souls didn’t want to chase me, but as for that monkey of a cultivator, he’s definitely dead!” Actually, the old man had no idea why the souls had abandoned the chase, but was relatively convinced that his own analysis was correct. Even if it wasn’t, he was still sure that the souls would consume Bai Xiaochun the instant he got too close.

As he chuckled coldly to himself, and the other cultivators looked on nervously, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes began to shine with determination.

“I should be fine. They definitely can’t see me!” Rubbing his mask to reassure himself, he took another step forward, and was inside the pit.

Of course, at the slightest sign of anything wrong, he was prepared to call upon the full strength of his fleshly body power, even to the point of harming himself, to flee. However, as soon as he entered the pit, he realized that the souls weren’t even looking at him. Instead, they simply continued to float around like before.

The thousand cultivators of his regiment, as well as the old soul cultivator, were all shocked.

“What’s going on...?”

Bai Xiaochun was delighted, but continued to maintain vigilance. He proceeded carefully through the throngs of souls, and the entire time, not a single one showed even a hint of paying attention to him.

Soon, he was deep within the crowd of souls, where he pulled out a Soul Convergence Pill and crushed it.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as a gravitational force erupted out. In the blink of an eye, more than 10,000 vengeful souls were sucked into a soul sphere, which Bai Xiaochun tossed into his bag

of holding. In response, the other souls were thrown into a commotion, which caused Bai Xiaochun to tense up for a moment before he realized that they still weren't able to see him.

Even as his subordinates looked on in shock, Bai Xiaochun chuckled, clasped his hands casually behind his back, and stuck his chin up, making himself look just like a lonely hero.

Everyone looking at him saw what appeared to be tens of millions of souls howling and screaming in madness, ready to destroy everything in their path. There were even some crimson souls of the Nascent Soul level who appeared right by Bai Xiaochun.

And yet, he calmly waved his hand and collected all of the souls nearby into a soul sphere.

He looked like a consummate master, completely calm and collected, and in no danger whatsoever!

Chapter 517: A Deva

The thousand men in Bai Xiaochun's legion looked on in both shock and fervor. However, when they considered who Bai Xiaochun was in the army, they realized that with him, nothing was beyond the realm of possibility.

He was Grandmaster Bai! He was in the top ten on the Wildlands Execution List! He had crushed a Nascent Soul cultivator in battle!

In terms of how many vengeful souls he had put an end to, it was impossible to even say. In fact, to call him the bane of vengeful souls was no exaggeration.

These cultivators viewed Bai Xiaochun with blind devotion, and therefore, were able to take the matter in stride. However, the old soul cultivator was so shocked he felt like the world was spinning around him.

“How... how is this even possible?!?!”

“Th-there... there must be hundreds of millions of souls in there! This... it's....” The old man had already reached the point where he could barely speak coherently. Considering what he himself had just experienced, the fact that Bai Xiaochun was acting completely calmly was almost impossible to accept.

But what happened next was even more terrifying. Even as the old man's mind teetered on the verge of collapse, he watched Bai Xiaochun pull out another Soul Convergence Pill and crush it. Immediately, more souls were sucked in, whereupon he pulled out another pill.

And that was how Bai Xiaochun proceeded into the depths of the pit. Every step along the way, he pulled out another Soul Convergence Pill. 10,000 souls. 30,000. 50,000. 100,000... 200,000. 500,000.... Not very much time passed at all before Bai Xiaochun had collected at least 1,000,000 souls. And he was barely exerting

any effort at all....

Of the 10,000,000 or so souls that existed at the entrance to the pit, it was clear that over ten percent had already been collected by Bai Xiaochun. The old soul cultivator was completely and utterly flabbergasted.

What was especially shocking was how casually Bai Xiaochun strutted along, almost as if he were taking a stroll in his own backyard. The old man's eyes looked like they might fall out of his face at any moment, and he could hardly breathe.

"Nascent Soul!" he screamed inwardly. "Dammit, this guy is definitely a Nascent Soul eccentric! That's the only explanation for this!! He's definitely a Nascent Soul eccentric who possesses some sort of powerful magical treasure!!" The old man was convinced that this was the only way to explain Bai Xiaochun's incredible performance. The way he had cut down Core Formation experts as if it were child's play indicated that he was definitely a Nascent Soul cultivator!

"Damned Heavenspan cultivators. I can't believe someone who's clearly a Nascent Soul expert would find it amusing to disguise himself as a Core Formation cultivator and then go around bullying people!!" Even as the old man stewed in his bitterness, Bai Xiaochun reached the point where he had collected the majority of the souls around the entrance. Although he was excited, he suddenly realized that he was running low on Soul Convergence Pills.

He quickly flew out of the pit and sped over to Zhao Long and the other members of his regiment, who were staring at him as if he were some sort of god.

"Hurry up and loan me your Soul Convergence Pills!" Bai Xiaochun said. "I'll pay you back later!" Without hesitation, the cultivators in his regiment began pulling out their Soul Convergence Pills and handing them to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was delighted to suddenly have so many Soul Convergence Pills at his disposal. He quickly turned and rushed back into the pit, where he began to head down toward the very bottom of the pit to collect more souls.

Zhao Long and the others hesitated for a bit, but then cautiously crept over to the edge of the pit and looked over the edge to watch.

What they saw was shocking to the extreme. There was Bai Xiaochun, standing on top of a white surface, looking around in astonishment and disbelief.

At first, no one was quite sure what they were seeing, but upon closer examination, they realized what that white surface was, and their minds reeled.

“That’s....”

“Heavens, he’s standing on... on a....” All of the cultivators in the regiment felt like their heads were about to explode, and as for the soul cultivator, he was literally screaming.

“How is this possible?!?! It’s a skeleton?!”

The mouth of the pit was actually an entryway leading into what they were now looking down into, an enormous necropolis!

It was virtually impossible to describe how large the necropolis was, but it was possible to see a shocking skeleton right there inside!

It was fully 300,000 meters in size, and from what they could see looking through the passageway, that was only part of the skull!

Bai Xiaochun was actually more shaken than the rest of them. At first, he hadn’t realized what exactly the white surface that he was standing on was, but after a moment, he realized it was a skull. And then he saw... the ghastly 300,000-meter skeleton!!

It wasn’t a human skull, but rather the skull of some enormous

crocodilian creature, stretching down into the necropolis. The bones were like mountain peaks, so shocking that Bai Xiaochun gasped out loud.

Furthermore, the enormous necropolis also contained... seemingly innumerable vengeful souls! None of the souls had fixed shapes, but rather, existed as misty spheres of different colors, within which faces would occasionally appear.

Considering how many of the souls there were floating around in the necropolis, it was possible to estimate that there were at least 100,000,000, or maybe more. Even a deva who was privy to this sight would feel shocked to the core. After all, if 100,000,000 souls all attacked at the same time, even a deva would perish under the assault, unless they possessed some special means of controlling the souls.

“Crocodile.... The deva beast soul that I grabbed looked like a crocodile. Could it be... that this skeleton was its fleshly body?!?!” The mere thought left Bai Xiaochun utterly shocked.

“So, does that mean that all these other souls showed up after it died, or... did they kill it?!?!” It was impossible to determine the answer to the question just by looking, but Bai Xiaochun certainly hoped that his former supposition was the correct one, not the latter.

And yet, for some reason, he had the feeling that something very strange was going on here, and that the latter... might not be too far from the truth.

It took a long moment for him to calm down. The only thing he could do was bury his speculations in his heart. Only one thing was for certain; there was definitely some big secret hidden in this place. Clearly, the restrictive spells that filled the area were one reason why no one had noticed the strange phenomena or come to investigate. Of course, a huge hole had opened up, which ensured that it wouldn't be long before either the Great Wall or the

Wildlanders discovered the place, and when that happened, there was no way Bai Xiaochun would be able to investigate the area alone.

“These souls are all battle credit!” he thought, his eyebrows dancing in anticipation. With that, he reached out and began to crush Soul Convergence Pills. In the blink of an eye, countless souls were all rushing toward him to form soul spheres.

However, there were so many souls in the area that the ground began to shake, and the screaming of the souls pierced dangerously into the minds of the onlookers.

The cultivators of Bai Xiaochun’s regiment, as well as the old soul cultivator, felt their own souls trembling in response to the sound, and some people even found blood oozing out of the corners of their mouths. They quickly began to back up in terror. The soul cultivator was especially frightened considering that his cultivation base had been sealed. He was coughing up mouthfuls of blood, and his face was as ashen as death.

“How many souls are down there!?!? Heavens! That sound couldn't come from any less than 10,000,000 souls. Or maybe even... 100,000,000!!” The old man was reeling in disbelief. Based on his experience, even large armies that marched into battle would never go in with more than 10,000,000 souls. A force of 100,000,000 was something that he had never even laid eyes on.

Zhao Long and the other cultivators in the regiment were astonished, and also worried for Bai Xiaochun. However, none of them revealed such feelings as they backed up and kept their eyes fixed on the pit.

Down inside, Bai Xiaochun was looking around ashen-faced as he realized he had discovered another use to the mask. Shockingly, it could reduce the effects he felt because of the shrieking of the souls, making it possible to stand there without being hurt.

“Rich! I’m rich!” he exulted inwardly. Eyes shining with

excitement, he continued to collect more and more soul spheres, simultaneously calculating how much battle credit he would earn.

A day flashed by, during which terrifying howling sounds continued to echo out from the pit. Outside, everyone was looking on nervously, except for the old soul cultivator, who was trembling in astonishment and terror.

“Heavens! Just what kind of cultivation base does this guy have!?!?”

“There’s no way that a Core Formation cultivator could remain so close to that sound without exploding. Not even a Nascent Soul expert could do it for long!!

“The only kind of person who could, would be... a deva!!

“He... he couldn’t possibly be... a deva, could he?!?” The old man’s thoughts were in chaos as his terror mounted. Before, he had harbored a slim bit of hope that he might be able to get out of the situation alive and then get revenge. But now, such thoughts were long gone.

“Heavens! If he’s really a deva, then everything makes sense. Deva eccentrics always have strange habits, perhaps even... masquerading as Core Formation cultivators....” Convinced that he had gotten to the bottom of the truth, the old man felt even more terrified than before.

Chapter 518: It's All To Become A Major General

To everyone on the outside, the passage of time left them more and more nervous. Inside the pit, Bai Xiaochun's eyes were shining, and his eyebrows were dancing with happiness.

He was now almost out of Soul Convergence Pills. It had taken a whole day to go through several thousand of them, which meant that he had already collected tens of millions of souls.

Whenever he scanned the thousands of soul spheres in his bag of holding, he could almost see all of the battle credit coming his way, and couldn't help but muse on how amazing he was.

"I absolutely have to become a major general!!" he declared loudly, eyes shining with excitement. After using his last few Soul Convergence Pills, he patted his bag of holding a bit begrudgingly.

"If I had known this was going to happen, I would have come prepared!" There were still so many vengeful souls in the area that they were almost impossible to count. It made him feel like he had encountered an iceberg made of gold, but had only been able to see the tip of it.

The feeling of not wanting to leave caused him to heave numerous sighs.

"Well, there's nothing I can do," he thought with gritted teeth and bloodshot eyes. "For the sake of the safety of my brothers on the outside, I should probably get back. Then I can concoct some more Soul Convergence Pills and come back later!" There were definitely more than enough vengeful souls here to propel him to the rank of major general. The feeling of having that promotion just within arm's reach was exciting, and the mere thought of how different his life would be as a major general got his heart racing. Finally, he turned and headed out of the pit.

As soon as he flew out into the open, the cultivators of his regiment bristled with excitement as they awaited his orders. As for the old soul cultivator, he was trembling physically because of the waves of shock battering his heart.

Clearly, Bai Xiaochun wasn't injured at all. His eyes were bloodshot and he seemed tired, but in very high spirits. All of that only served to convince the old man that his previous suppositions were correct.

“He's definitely a deva....” the old man thought, seemingly on the verge of tears. As far as he could tell, nobody but a deva could possibly survive in that terrifying pit for a day without being hurt.

“Why the hell is a deva picking on me like this...?” he thought, staring at Bai Xiaochun with despair.

Everyone watched as Bai Xiaochun set up a rudimentary spell formation over the entrance of the pit, then flew over, swished his sleeve, and said, “Let's get back to the Great Wall!”

The cultivators in the regiment breathed sighs of relief.

Although these were all crack troops under the leadership of a famous officer, they had been away from the Great Wall for quite some time. Plus, the area they were in seemed far too quiet. Although they could tell that there were natural restrictive spells in the area that were likely the reason that no one had sensed the strange phenomena, they also knew that the longer they stayed in one place, the more danger they would be in.

If any of the powerful groups in the Wildlands showed up, they would definitely end up facing a major crisis.

Therefore, as soon as the orders left Bai Xiaochun's lips, they scattered and began to make their own way back to the Great Wall.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he began to retrace his own route back. After proceeding for a bit, he looked back in the direction of the pit, and saw what appeared to be nothing more than a mountain

range of countless overlapping shadows. There weren't even any sounds coming from the area.

Considering it was currently late at night, the countless shadows looked very foreboding.

“Are the restrictive spells in there really natural?” Bai Xiaochun thought. Recalling the image of the huge crocodile skeleton, he quietly turned and proceeded back toward the Great Wall.

On his initial trip leaving the wall, he had proceeded with caution as he made his way along. Although he was still cautious on the way back, he was in a much different mood. Furthermore, the trip back went very smoothly. Although he ran into a few small groups of vengeful souls, none of them slowed him down, and within a few hours, he was within sight of the Great Wall.

It was now just before dawn on his third day outside. Although the lands were bathed in darkness, the spell formation shield on the wall made it seem like a huge dragon hulking there, radiating shocking energy that would astonish anyone who laid eyes on it.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun and his regiment were used to the sight of the Great Wall, but not the old soul cultivator. He began to tremble even harder than before. And yet there was nothing he could do as the cultivators of the regiment produced their identity medallions and entered the Great Wall through one of the small entrances.

Even till this point, the old man had no idea who Bai Xiaochun really was. After entering Great Wall City, the cultivators sent him to the prisoner of war camp, where he would be handed over to the interrogators for questioning.

As for the thousand men in his regiment, Bai Xiaochun didn't treat them stingily. As soon as they regrouped, he rewarded each of them with a soul sphere.

Although the 10,000 souls they were each being given wasn't

necessarily a huge amount, considering that Bai Xiaochun had only collected only a few tens of millions of souls in total, it still counted as a lot. It was an amount that not even Bai Lin or the other generals would hand out as a reward.

“Brothers, stick with me, and you’ll always have alcohol to drink and meat to eat. Whenever good things happen to me, I won’t ever forget about you!” Not only did the eyes of the men shine brightly, they needed no reminder from Bai Xiaochun to understand that the matters which had occurred on the outside needed to be kept under tight wraps.

Bai Xiaochun didn't waste any time. After handing out the rewards to the regiment, he didn't rest, but instead, excitedly went to his residence to work on concocting medicine. His main goal, of course, was to produce as many Soul Convergence Pill as he could in a short time.

As for the soulhorn mission, he had Zhao Long and some of the others go hand it in. Not long after they did, Bai Xiaochun's identity medallion vibrated and emitted bright red light as 1,000,000 battle credits were added to it.

Another three days passed, during which time Bai Xiaochun didn't rest at all. Eyes bloodshot, he concocted medicine like mad, producing one batch of Soul Convergence Pills after another. Including some others he'd had lying around, he now had more than 5,000, and simply couldn't wait any longer.

“Long delays usually lead to trouble. The longer I wait, the more likely someone is to find that place....” By this point, it seemed more likely than ever that he would be able to get a promotion to major general. Therefore, he gritted his teeth and threw caution to the wind. When night fell, he slipped out of the command center, not telling anyone that he was leaving. By utilizing his Undying Tendons and the Undying Hex divine ability he had gained enlightenment of, he left the city.

After vanishing, he once again felt like his body was about to be ripped apart. A long moment passed, whereupon he reappeared on the battlefield outside of the Great Wall. Then, without any hesitation, he sped off into the night.

Of course, he was already wearing his mask. Based on the soul fluctuations it sent out, along with his murderous aura, it ensured that any savages or soul cultivators who saw him along the way perceived him to be someone no one would provoke.

After drawing upon all the speed he could muster, Bai Xiaochun soon reached those same shadowy mountains that he had left a few days before. Making sure he wasn't being followed, he headed into the mountains.

However, after searching thoroughly, his face fell as he realized that the pit was nowhere to be found!

"This is definitely the spot.... Why isn't it here? Could it be something to do with the restrictive spells?" After looking around a few times, he finally decided to open his third eye. However, not even that revealed any clues.

Most other people would likely have given up at that point. But Bai Xiaochun wasn't so willing to give in. He continued to search here and there, calling upon his Heavenspan Dharma Eye every so often. After several hours had passed, and dawn approached, the countless overlapping shadows that were the mountains suddenly seemed to start folding in on themselves.

"So that's how it is!" Bai Xiaochun thought, his expression brightening.

Chapter 519: Huge Soul!

The natural restrictive spells in the area seemed complex, but were actually quite simple. The layout of the overlapping mountains in the area would shift depending on the time of day.

The way the mountains were organized affected the method of entry. Back when Bai Xiaochun had first come to the area, there hadn't been any such restrictive spells active. However, upon leaving, it had been when the break of dawn was approaching.

Therefore, the route he remembered could only be retraced at that same time.

In fact, even at that exact same time, it also required additional effort to find the path. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, and was thus able to find the path.

Upon realizing these facts, he quickly left the mountains and then flew back in.

This time, he quickly found a path leading into the depths of the mountains. After about two hours passed, he found the pit!

Suppressing his excitement, he refrained from immediately jumping inside, and instead surveyed the area. For one thing, he checked the spell formation he had set up earlier to see if anyone else had come by.

After discovering that the spell formation was unaltered, he breathed a sigh of relief. Then he flew into the pit and descended into the necropolis.

Upon entering the necropolis, Bai Xiaochun was thrilled to find that the number of souls had returned to the amount from before. There were clearly more than 100,000,000, which was the original amount before he collected the majority of them.

“Could it be that the souls here are literally without end?!” Overjoyed, he began to toss out Soul Convergence Pills.

“100,000 battle credits!”

“1,000,000 battle credits!”

“Hahaha! 10,000,000 battle credits!” Bai Xiaochun was bubbling with happiness. The only thing he regretted was that he didn’t have more Soul Convergence Pills. This time, he spent a total of two days before he ran through all 5,000 of them. The only reason he took so long was that he tried to make sure that each pill was used in the most effective manner. As such, he continued to proceed further and further into the necropolis.

Two days later, he emerged from the pit with 50,000,000 vengeful souls in his possession. After waiting until the break of dawn was nearing, he followed the same path to the outside and then left for the Great Wall.

He proceeded with extreme nervousness, feeling like he was holding an incredibly valuable treasure, and that someone might try to rob him at any moment. If some accident occurred, and his trip back to the Great Wall was interrupted, then his dream of becoming a major general might be dashed to pieces.

Thankfully, his mask was very powerful, and made him look just like a soul cultivator. Coupled with the caution he showed, it ensured that he didn’t run into any problems. When he finally reached the battlefield outside the Great Wall, he used his Undying Hex ability to get back into the city.

“Now I have more than 70,000,000 vengeful souls. If I convert them all to battle credit, it will be a huge amount. Sadly, I still have to get a lot more before I can get that major general promotion. I have to keep working hard!” Feeling excited, but also worried that something unexpected might occur in the pit, he recruited all of his subordinates to go out and borrow as many Soul Convergence Pills from other members of the five legions as possible.

After all, most of the Soul Convergence Pills that he had concocted since arriving at the Great Wall had been distributed

among the five legions.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun didn't remain idle while his subordinates went to borrow Soul Convergence Pills. He went to many of the commissaries in the city that specialized in spell formations, and bought as many pre-packaged formations as he could get his hands on.

After all, he wasn't sure how many Soul Convergence Pills his subordinates would be able to get, and wanted to be fully prepared on his next trip to the pit.

A few days later, he was delighted to find that his subordinates had managed to get their hands on over 90,000 Soul Convergence Pills.

“So many! This time I should definitely be able to succeed in getting that promotion to major general! With these 90,000 Soul Convergence Pills, plus all the souls I've already collected, I should be able to get a total of 1,000,000,000 vengeful souls!” With that, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Then, later that night, he slipped out of the city once again.

Being so familiar with the route, he proceeded along casually, entering the mountains right before the break of dawn. He encountered no problems along the way, and was soon at the pit. There, he put all of the spell formations in place, and then flew on down.

After looking around at all the vengeful souls, Bai Xiaochun was ecstatic to discover that, yet again, they had been replenished to the 100,000,000 level.

“This time, I'm definitely going to get that promotion to major general!” Feeling enormously proud of his imminent success, he headed into the necropolis, tossing out Soul Convergence Pills left and right.

The cracking sound of medicinal pills shattering filled the air.

With every pill that shattered, 10,000 vengeful souls would be gathered into a soul sphere. Considering the vast amount of Soul Convergence Pills he had at his disposal, it only took him three days to actually clear out the entire necropolis!

Then, after an incense stick's worth of time passed, streams of mist began to flow up from the ground, which were filled with countless vengeful souls! The roaring souls began to fly to and fro inside of the necropolis as they searched for Bai Xiaochun, and yet, couldn't find him.

Bai Xiaochun chuckled darkly as he waited for a bit until the souls had been restored to the 100,000,000 level, then once again began to collect them.

“They’re mine!

“All mine!

“Hahaha! I'm going to be a major general!” What made him even more proud was that he was developing some techniques to collect the souls even more quickly than before. This time, it only took him two days to clear out the entire necropolis.

Then, before long, a third wave of souls appeared....

It was in this fashion that seven days sped by. At that point, he started to run low on Soul Convergence Pills; he only had a few thousand left.

Of course, he wouldn't leave until he was completely out. However, it was at this point that something unique happened; for some unknown reason, after clearing out the necropolis and waiting for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, no new souls appeared.

“Hmm. Aren't there any more?” Curious, he flew here and there in the necropolis for about an hour, and yet no souls could be seen. Stunned, he murmured, “I guess there really aren't any more.”

He could only shake his head and sigh ruefully at the fact that he

still had some Soul Convergence Pills left, but no vengeful souls to collect. Unfortunately, he was very close to having 1,000,000,000 vengeful souls, which was how many he needed to become a major general.

“And here I thought I had found a never-ending supply of battle credit. Who could have thought this place would run out so quickly?” Feeling less than pleased, he waited around for a bit longer to confirm that no more souls were forthcoming. Finally, he began to fly toward the exit.

However, just when he was about to fly out into the open, everything around him began to tremble, and then, a huge rift opened up in the ground of the necropolis.

In fact, not only was there a rift, but there were numerous crashing sounds like thunder. Apparently, the necropolis was collapsing! Even the shocking crocodile skeleton was beginning to sink down into the earth!

This development caused Bai Xiaochun’s face to flicker, and then transform into an expression of delight.

“Don’t tell me there’s another level down below?!” However, as he looked down, all he saw was a thick, seemingly endless stream of black mist pulsing out from below.

Within that mist, it was just possible to see a gigantic ghost hand stretching out as if to grab Bai Xiaochun, accompanied by a roar of rage.

The sight of the gigantic ghost hand caused Bai Xiaochun’s face to fall, and filled his heart with an intense sensation of deadly crisis. Every bit of his flesh and blood began to scream at him that he was descending into incredible danger!

“It can see me?”

“I’m finished! I must have provoked some gigantic soul that wants to destroy me!” Screaming and shivering, he hurled out

several thousand Soul Convergence Pills, which detonated shortly after, creating a massive gravitational force that caused the ghost hand to distort and slow down. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun began to flee for his life.

Even as he shot out of the pit, another roar of rage could be heard from behind him, and the enormous ghost hand once again reached out to grab him.

Chapter 520: Black Pillar of Light!

As the ghost hand moved forward, the air around it distorted, causing everything near Bai Xiaochun to be completely locked down. Bai Xiaochun couldn't escape any more easily than he could have escaped from a locked cage!

Because of the profound sensation of crisis, his eyes were completely bloodshot, and blue veins even began to bulge out on his face and neck. Just when the hand was about to grab him, though, he roared and called deeply upon his Undying Hex.

He took a step forward, causing his body to suddenly begin to turn blurry. By the time his foot landed, he had suddenly vanished!

A boom rang out as the shocking ghost hand closed around the space Bai Xiaochun had just occupied, and yet, grabbed nothing but air.

An enraged roar filled the pit, a roar so loud that it broke through the spell formations, causing everything to tremble and attracting the attention of numerous people in the area.

Meanwhile, only about five hundred meters beyond the entrance, Bai Xiaochun appeared, staggering forward, coughing up numerous mouthfuls of blood, his face ashen.

Shockingly, his back was also bloodied, and five long wounds had been scraped down it!

It looked the type of serious injury that could even damage internal organs. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had a very powerful fleshly body, and thus managed to hold himself together. Blood was oozing out of his mouth, and his heart was pounding with lingering fear, and yet he didn't even pause for a moment before speeding off.

Even as he shot out of the strange mountains, a black pillar of light rumbled up into the sky behind him, creating a shockwave

that rolled out in all directions.

The natural restrictive spells in the area were all smashed by the powerful energy shooting out from the pit, and were completely destroyed.

Bai Xiaochun was scared out of his mind, and was fleeing for his life through the wild terrain, heart pounding as he focused solely on getting back to the Great Wall.

“I'm finished. Kaput. I got too greedy, didn't I, and summoned something big...?” Feeling very dismayed that he had brought about such a catastrophe, he pushed forward with greater speed.

Meanwhile, many savages and soul cultivators near the pit could see what was happening, and looked over in astonishment.

“What's going on!?”

“Those fluctuations are unbelievable!” Even as they cried out in surprise, they began to head in the direction of the pit to investigate.

Thankfully for them, after the black pillar of light shot up and destroyed the spell formations and natural restrictive spells, the enormous ghost hand didn't appear again.

Therefore, they weren't in any extreme danger, and in fact, after they arrived at the pit and peered down inside, some of them flew in to look around more.

The forces in Great Wall City also noticed the black pillar of light. Chen Hetian stepped out of the huge pagoda, and looked at the black pillar and its incredible fluctuations, a very serious expression on his face.

“Send someone to investigate,” he ordered. “Find out what that is!” Even as he passed down orders, Bai Lin saw the black pillar and sensed its fluctuations.

Further out in the Wildlands, on the plain with the encampment

of hundreds of savage tribes, a large tent could be seen in the middle of the camp. Seated inside that tent was a young woman in a long red robe, who was none other than Mistress Red-Dust. Suddenly, her eyes opened, and she looked up into the sky at the pillar of light.

“Could that be...?” After a moment of hesitation, she passed down orders for people to go investigate.

Even as the two major forces sent people to look into the situation, two figures could be seen standing in the mountains a few kilometers away. One was a young man, the other a young woman, and they appeared to be in sore straits. Their clothing was ripped and torn, and haunted expressions could be seen in their eyes, the type that would leave anyone who saw them shaken. They almost looked like wild beasts.

There was nothing about these two that indicated they were cultivators. They had soul fluctuations rippling off of them, and also possessed shockingly murderous auras.

The young man seemed cold and proud, while the young woman was extremely beautiful. Both of them had clearly been injured fairly recently. Although their injuries had healed, the evidence of their presence was clear; apparently, these two had fought numerous bloody battles.

This young man and woman were none other than Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan!

After leaving the Great Wall years ago, they had begun to travel about in the Wildlands. They had fought many battles, and even built up a small team composed of other cultivators from the Great Wall whom they had encountered during their travels. However, at this point, everyone else was dead, leaving them as the sole survivors. They had gone through what was essentially a baptism of blood, leaving them completely reborn inside and out.

In the past, there had been something tender and immature

about them, but that was long gone now. Instead, they were completely composed and cold-looking!

“We need to get back to the Great Wall as quickly as possible....” Zhao Tianjiao said. “I already sent a message to Master. Once we get back, we can spend the rest of our time as members of the five legions.” He chuckled, causing the scar that ran from the right corner of his mouth to his ear to twist in ferocious fashion.

Chen Yueshan seemed slightly distressed as she stood there next to Zhao Tianjiao. In response to his words, she looked over at him and nodded, her gaze lingering on his scar. He had earned that scar in battle when he had saved her from a dangerous necromancer.

The mere thought of the bitterness of that battle left her heart thumping with fear. Thankfully, their training outside the wall had resulted in injuries, and yet had resulted in them finding a deva beast soul!

Just as they were about to head back to the Great Wall, they saw a shocking black pillar of light shooting up into the air off in the distance. After some discussion about the matter, Zhao Tianjiao sent a message to his master Chen Hetian asking for instructions about what to do. After word came back, they began to head, not toward the Great Wall, but toward the black pillar.

Thanks to the black pillar of light, both the Wildlands and the Great Wall were sending people to investigate the situation.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was speeding along at top speed, his face ashen. Eventually, he caught sight of the Great Wall, whereupon he gritted his teeth and yet again called upon the Undying Hex to pass inside.

After coughing up some blood, he staggered back into his residence in his command center, whereupon he fell over, unconscious.

Three days later, he woke up and struggled into a cross-legged

position. After examining himself, he found that his five yin organs and six yang organs were all in extreme pain, and his cultivation base was in total chaos.

“That ghost hand was absolutely horrifying,” he thought. “And it didn’t even grab me, just graze my back....” When he thought back to everything that had occurred, the fear in his heart continued to eat away at him. Of course, he also knew that one of the reasons he was so hurt was because he had used the Undying Hex to pierce through the air and get past multiple spell formations.

Whether it was the natural restrictive spells from the mountains, or the Great Wall’s spell formation, piercing through the air to get past them was very harmful to him.

Thankfully, his Undying Live Forever Technique was very powerful, and was able to sustain such stress. Normally speaking, even a Nascent Soul cultivator would hardly be able to accomplish what he had accomplished.

Another upside to the situation was that Bai Xiaochun’s regenerative powers vastly exceeded those of normal people. In combination with all of the medicinal pills he had at his disposal, it only took him about seven days to be almost completely recovered.

During that time, he didn’t dare to go out. As he pondered the ghost hand, the black pillar of light, the destruction of the necropolis, and the enormous, 300,000-meter crocodile skeleton, he came to the conclusion that the pit definitely harbored some monumental secret!

Then he thought about how he was the one responsible for everything that had occurred, and it struck him with even more fear. At the same time, he felt wronged.

“It’s not like I did it on purpose....” he thought, sighing. After all, he had only been trying to get his hands on some souls.

During his period of recovery, he continued to get reports from

Zhao Long and the rest of his regiment. That was how he learned that both Great Wall City and the Wildlands had taken the matter of the black pillar of light very seriously. In fact, quite a few people had entered the pit to explore the area.

Unfortunately, there was no other news than that.

Another half a month went by, during which time bits of news continued to trickle in. Considering that Bai Xiaochun was only a colonel, he didn't have access to very many details. Therefore, he went to Bai Lin to ask for more information. Apparently, quite a few people had been sent to gather intelligence, and although there had been some conflicts with the Wildlands forces, they were still able to send back some useful information. Supposedly, there was a big necropolis in the area where the beam of light had originated. When Bai Xiaochun heard that, he felt a bit more at ease.

"I guess I just opened a necropolis, that's all," he said to comfort himself. Looking out at the quiet streets in the city, he rubbed his bag of holding, and his eyes began to shine. "Well, the whole reason I went through all of that was to become a major general. I think now the time has come to finish the job!"

Chapter 521: Turning In The Vengeful Souls

When he thought about how impressive and glorious it would be to become a major general, his excitement began to build. With that, he hurried out into the command center, where Zhao Long and the others clasped hands in salute.

Waving his hand in grand fashion, he tried to sound as heroic as possible as he said, “Come, my brothers. Join me at the pagoda to witness... my promotion to major general!”

Zhao Long’s eyes went wide, but he quickly began to send messages to call everyone together. Before long, all 1,000 members of Bai Xiaochun’s regiment were notified, and were hurrying over.

“Brothers,” he said loudly, “once I become a major general, we’ll have more meat to eat and more alcohol to drink!” Then he flew into the air toward the pagoda.

All the cultivators in the regiment were very excited, and none of them questioned Bai Xiaochun’s words at all. If he said that he was going to become a major general, then they had complete confidence that he would do just that.

It made quite a grand sight as the entire group clustered around him and flew toward the pagoda.

The sight of more than a thousand beams of light shooting through Great Wall City captured the attention of quite a few other cultivators. However, many soldiers had looks of derision on their faces. After all, the sight of Bai Xiaochun parading through the city wasn’t anything new. The only surprising thing was how long it had been since they last saw him do it.

Most of them gave him little more than a single glance. Before long, Bai Xiaochun and his men were outside of the pagoda, where quite a few other cultivators were gathered to either purchase items or turn in souls.

The arrival of Bai Xiaochun and his men didn't cause too much of a stir, and most people just continued on with whatever business they had at hand.

Ignoring them, Bai Xiaochun walked up to the pagoda, took a deep breath, and then flew up into the air, just as he had seen the top chosen do in the past when they handed in vengeful souls. There, he waved his sleeve, producing a soul sphere which he subsequently crushed!

A boom could be heard as souls poured out from the crushed soul sphere. The sight of so many souls attracted a bit of envy from some of the cultivators present, although most of them weren't paying much attention.

“Oh, it's Bai Xiaochun!”

As soon as the 10,000 vengeful souls appeared, the giant eye atop the pagoda absorbed them.

Feeling quite pleased with himself, Bai Xiaochun patted his bag of holding to produce another soul sphere. After crushing it, another 10,000 souls appeared, which the eye absorbed. Then he produced a third sphere, causing quite a few curious eyes to look up at him from below.

Just when he was about to crush the third soul sphere, a blood-colored beam of light appeared off in the distance, which caused a murderous aura to fill the entire area.

“That's... Ji Feng!”

“Colonel Ji Feng! Back before Bai Xiaochun rose to prominence, he was considered the Core Formation cultivator most likely to become a major general! I wonder which of the two of them will actually succeed?”

As the crowd buzzed, the beam of light faded away, revealing a young man with long hair, clad in a suit of blood-colored armor.

That young man was none other than Ji Feng!

He hovered to a stop in midair on the other side of the huge pagoda, making it possible for him to look Bai Xiaochun right in the eye. When he did, an expression of scorn appeared on his face.

“Trifling apothecary,” he thought. “Other than a nice cultivation base, what do you have? I, Ji Feng, have too much battle credit to count. What makes you think you deserve to compare yourself to me?!”

Not only did Ji Feng despise Bai Xiaochun, he despised his Soul Convergence Pills as well. As far as he was concerned, Bai Xiaochun was nothing more than an apothecary who had used some fancy tricks to get into a good position, and didn’t compare to him at all!

He actually hadn’t planned to hand in any souls today, but after seeing Bai Xiaochun show up, he decided to come put him in his place.

Bai Xiaochun recognized Ji Feng. Technically speaking, this was their second time encountering each other. The first time had been back when he first got to the Great Wall, and had come to check how much battle credit he had to spend to get certain items. At that time, Ji Feng had handed in 10,000 souls to the pagoda and caused quite a stir. Of course, that was before the advent of Soul Convergence Pills, when getting 10,000 souls together in one place had been quite an accomplishment.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the scorn in Ji Feng’s eyes, he was actually a bit surprised. “I never did anything to offend you, did I?” he thought.

But after thinking about it for a moment, he realized what was going on, and glared at Ji Feng.

Ji Feng looked back at him coldly, and soon, it became obvious that they were having a bit of a showdown.

When the cultivators down below saw what was happening, their

spirits were roused, and they began to pay close attention.

“They’re having a stand-off!”

“I’m more of a fan of Colonel Ji Feng. He got his battle credit from climbing mountains of corpses and swimming through seas of blood!”

“Didn’t Colonel Bai Xiaochun do the same thing though? Forget about the Soul Convergence Pill, for a moment. Do you know how many people he saved in that battle!?”

As people talked about the matter, and even placed some bets, Ji Feng chuckled coldly and then waved his arm, sending a collection of 100,000 vengeful soul streaming out of his bag of holding. Although the souls were somewhat listless and faded, as soon as they appeared in the open, the huge eye quickly absorbed them.

“100,000 souls....”

“Colonel Ji Feng definitely deserves his reputation as a top chosen in the five legions. He doesn’t even use Soul Convergence Pills, but still managed to collect 100,000 souls!”

After tossing out the 100,000 souls, Ji Feng looked over coldly at Bai Xiaochun, and from the look in his eye, his message was clear. You have souls, right? Well let's have a little contest and see who has the most!

A smile immediately broke out on Bai Xiaochun’s face. Now that he thought about it, handing over souls all by himself was actually pretty boring. But who would have thought that Ji Feng would suddenly show up and want to have a contest? The truth was that Bai Xiaochun loved crushing opponents in this way. Sighing, he waved his hand to send twenty soul spheres flying out.

A boom rang out as the soul spheres collapsed, sending out a vast cloud of 200,000 souls. Almost as soon as the shocking sight appeared, the huge eye atop the pagoda began to shine brightly, and quickly absorbed them.

Then, Bai Xiaochun looked over at Ji Feng with an expression of open provocation.

Ji Feng's expression turned grim, and he chuckled in disdain. Waving his hand, he sent tens of thousands of souls flying out of his bag of holding. However, he didn't stop there. Having emptied one bag of holding, he pulled out another, opened it, and sent an additional group of tens of thousands of souls out to be absorbed by the huge eye.

This scene immediately provoked exclamations of shock from the surrounding cultivators.

“Heavens! Just how many vengeful souls does Colonel Ji Feng have?!”

“How did he possibly get so many souls...?”

Everyone else was shocked, but Bai Xiaochun was actually feeling a bit impatient.

“Alright, how many souls do you have?” he said loudly. “Just spit out the number. Sitting around while you open up a bunch of bags of holding is too boring. How about this. You say a number, and if I can't produce that many souls, then I'll admit defeat.”

The arrogant tone with which he spoke immediately caused the entire area to go quiet.

“Think you're really tough stuff, don't you?” Ji Feng replied. “Well, since you're asking to be humiliated, then I'll oblige!” Then his hands blurred as he sent one bag of holding after another flying out, until there were nine of them. “Feast your eyes upon 2,700,000 vengeful souls!”

Although Ji Feng's words were spoken with coolness and calm, it was impossible to conceal the arrogance which existed deep in his bones.

Complete and utter silence met Ji Feng's words and actions. A few breaths of time passed, and then, with the exception of Bai

Xiaochun's subordinates, everyone devolved into a huge commotion.

“2,700,000? Heavens!”

“I can't believe that the exalted Colonel Ji Feng can produce so many souls! That's... that's as many souls as you'll see in a small-scale battle outside the Great Wall!” In addition to crying out in surprise, many cultivators began to send messages to their friends, telling them to hurry over to watch the scene playing out.

“Hurry up, Colonel Ji Feng is handing in 2,700,000 vengeful souls! This kind of thing has never happened before, it's incredible!!”

“Get over to the pagoda!”

Meanwhile, Ji Feng was looking over at Bai Xiaochun with feigned indifference, a faint smile on his face that reflected his confidence in having secured a victory.

“I don't have that many souls,” he said, “only about 2,000,000. What about you, Bai Xiaochun...?”

Sticking his chin up, Bai Xiaochun said, “You're right, that isn't very many. Only 2,000,000? A drop in the bucket!”

Bai Xiaochun felt like he was a top martial arts master fighting a little kid. It was actually a wonderful feeling. Chuckling, he waved his hand.

300 soul spheres flew out.... But things didn't stop there. Next came another 300, and then 400.... That was a total of 1,000 soul spheres, all floating there for everyone to see!

Chapter 522: The True Spirit Protects Its Food

The sight of 1,000 soul spheres flying out into the open caused jaws to drop everywhere. Ji Feng was so shocked that he wasn't even sure he could believe what he was seeing. Everything was deathly quiet in the area surrounding the pagoda.

As for the cultivators who were currently in the middle of flying over to the pagoda, when they got close and saw 1,000 soul spheres, their eyes went wide.

“One... one thousand?”

“Heavens! Don't tell me he actually has 10,000,000 vengeful souls? How is that even possible?!?”

“There's no way that each of those soul spheres has 10,000 vengeful souls in it. Is there?”

Everyone was reeling in shock, and Ji Feng was struggling with an intense feeling of unease. Although it was impossible to tell exactly how many souls were inside each of the 1,000 soul spheres, he couldn't help but get very nervous. Just when he was about to open his mouth to say something, though, Bai Xiaochun, who apparently didn't feel he had dominated the situation enough, licked his lips and said, “Using 1,000 soul spheres to crush your 2,000,000 souls is a bit boring. Check this out!”

Every time he encountered a situation like this to totally show off, he got very excited. Clearing his throat loudly, he waved his hand in a circle, causing another 1,000 soul spheres to fly out. However, things weren't over yet....

Another 1,000 appeared. Then another. And another.

In the blink of an eye, a total of 10,000 soul spheres were floating around!

Everyone present felt their minds reeling as they gasped in astonishment. As they stared, they mentally calculated how many souls that could represent, and were filled with even more incredulity than before. In fact, many of them couldn't even believe that their own calculations were correct.

“No way....”

“10,000? Okay... theoretically it's possible. Maybe each of the soul spheres only has a few souls in it...?” Even as everyone waited in nervous uncertainty, Ji Feng lost his ability to keep his mouth shut.

“You think you can pull a fast one, Bai Xiaochun?” he said loudly. “I refuse to believe that you have 10,000 souls sealed inside each of those soul spheres. What a joke! 10,000 soul spheres with 10,000 souls each? Do you really think that someone like you can collect more than 100,000,000 souls?” Considering how bloodshot Ji Feng's eyes were, it was clear that he definitely didn't believe Bai Xiaochun had 100,000,000 souls.

After all, a group of souls that large would only be seen in large-scale battles. Furthermore, if they were all released at once, they would most certainly blot out the sky and cause the lands to quake violently.

“Don't believe it? Well why don't you just take a look?!” Lifting his chin slightly, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waved his finger at the soul spheres.

“Open!”

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

10,000 soul spheres exploded, and in the blink of an eye, souls immediately began to spill out, filling the entire 30,000-meter area, and then rapidly expanding to fill a 300,000-meter area!

And yet, things weren't over yet! Within a single breath of time, that area stretched to 3,000,000 meters!!

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was doing that on purpose. If he had wished, he could have prevented such a dramatic display. But right now, the entire 3,000,000-meter area around him was filled with vengeful souls. That area far surpassed the limits of Great Wall City, and ensured that the entire city was now cast into darkness. Heaven shook and the earth quaked, causing countless cultivators of the five legions in the city to look up in shock.

“Are the Wildlands attacking?”

“Did the spell formation get destroyed?!?!”

“What’s... what’s happening?!?” As countless exclamations of shock rose up, the cultivators near the pagoda were trembling mutely, as if their minds had been reduced to complete blanks....

Even the generals of the five legions were shaken. Bai Lin flew out into the open and looked up in astonishment at the sky, as did the other generals.

“How... how many souls is that?!?”

Numerous beams of light were flying through the air toward the pagoda as almost all of the cultivators of the five legions struggled with each other to be able to witness what was happening.

The commotion caused Chen Hetian to emerge from the pagoda, whereupon he looked around in disbelief. At that point, the huge eye atop the pagoda began to shine with unprecedentedly bright light, a light that seemed excited. It was almost as if the eye itself possessed a spirit, and that spirit were jubilant.

A gravitational force sprang out, causing winds to scream as a vortex formed. Soon, the shocking sea of souls began to slowly shrink down as it was absorbed, the process of which took a full hour.

As the light bathed Bai Xiaochun, he felt satisfied to an indescribable degree. And of course, his battle credit skyrocketed.

As the sea of souls faded away, Bai Xiaochun hovered there in

midair, his chin stuck up, his expression tranquil, but his heart leaping with excitement. In fact, he had to repeatedly remind himself that in this moment, he needed to keep his cool.

The cultivators in the area were stupefied, and were looking at Bai Xiaochun both as if he were a god, and also as if he were some sort of freak of nature!!

Ji Feng was trembling as violently, as if Bai Xiaochun had struck him physically. His entire world suddenly seemed to have been turned upside down, his mind rendered a complete blank. Clearly, this was an event which he would never be able to forget for the rest of his life.

People began to look over at Ji Feng with expressions of sympathy. The blow which had just been delivered to him was a vicious one; his opponent had used 100,000,000 souls to crush his paltry 2,000,000....

Even Bai Lin and the other generals were looking at him with sympathy, as was three-eyed Chen Hetian. In that moment of extreme pride, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat loudly and said, "Everybody back up a bit. The next set is even larger...."

Before anyone could react, the huge eye atop the pagoda sent out blinding beams of light that almost seemed to be pandering to Bai Xiaochun as they created incredible pressure that pushed all of the surrounding cultivators away!

Not even Bai Lin and the other generals were exempt. Soon, the only person standing nearby was Chen Hetian, who was staring with wide-eyed shock at what was happening. He had never seen the true spirit inside of the eye do anything remotely like this. It was almost as if it were following orders from Bai Xiaochun.

Beads of sweat popped out on his forehead as he muttered, "This... this...."

That was when Bai Xiaochun slapped his bag of holding, causing

numerous soul spheres to pour out of it. 1,000. 3,000. 5,000....

In the blink of an eye, another 10,000 soul spheres had appeared!

Even as gasps began to ring out, more soul spheres flew out. 15,000. 20,000... 30,000... 40,000....

Every single cultivator in the entire city was shaken to the ultimate degree. Finally, when the number of soul spheres reached 60,000, the people erupted into a thunderous hubbub.

“Impossible!!”

“Did this Bai Xiaochun tap into the Underworld River or something!?!?”

“So many souls.... Heavens! Are... are they really souls?!?!”

“Unheard-of. This is completely unheard-of!!”

Bai Lin and the other generals were dumbstruck, and Chen Hetian was completely flabbergasted, and incapable of even reacting.

However, most elated of all was the huge eye. It seemed openly excited, as though it were trembling in joy.

Soon, more than 80,000 soul spheres were visible, and the excitement of the huge eye began to affect the Great Wall’s spell formation. The spell formation shield was rippling and distorting, the sight of which cast shock into the hearts of the onlookers.

Outside in the Wildlands, people could see the distortions on the spell formation shield, and although they weren’t sure what was happening, they could tell that something momentous was occurring. Curious, Mistress Red-Dust finally sent some divine sense out toward the Great Wall to see what was going on.

It was at that point that 90,000 soul spheres were out in the open. Then the huge eye emitted a scream of frenzied delight that caused everything in heaven and earth to tremble!

The sound of it caused Mistress Red-Dust’s divine sense to

instantly shatter. Back in her tent in the Wildlands, her eyes snapped open, and she coughed up a massive mouthful of blood.

“Impossible!” she exclaimed. “I can understand why the true spirit in that eye is willing to protect the Great Wall, considering it made an agreement with the Celestial. But why would it go so far as to use True Spirit Resonance to wound me and force me away?!?!?”

Chapter 523: Promoted to Major General!

When Mistress Red-Dust's divine sense was shattered, Chen Hetian detected it. First, he looked out at the Wildlands, then he looked down at the huge eye, his expression that of amazement.

Obviously, he had also detected the True Spirit Resonance....

A true spirit could call upon the quintessence of its voice to unleash a True Spirit Resonance, but would usually only do so in extremely dire circumstances. It was quite draining on the true spirit, but was incredibly powerful, so much so that even a deva would be forced to go all out to defend against it.

Although the True Spirit Resonance from moments ago had not been fully powered, it had been enough to destroy Mistress Red-Dust's divine sense, and would definitely have been very draining to the true spirit.

The true spirit and its pagoda were closely connected to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and in fact, only a few people knew the true origin of the true spirit, one of those people being Chen Hetian. The truth was that it... came from Heavenspan Island in the Heavenspan Sea!

To the riversource sects on the four branches of the Heavenspan River, Heavenspan Island was like a supreme entity. In the mortal world, emperors were often supported by noble ministers, and the relationship between the four riversource sects and Heavenspan Island was much the same. The sects were the nobility, and Heavenspan Island was the imperial palace!

Heavenspan Island was also the home of the Celestial. Naturally... he was the ruler of the lands of Heavenspan.

And now, the true spirit who had been convinced by Heavenspan Island to guard the Great Wall had suddenly acted in this way.... As a result, Chen Hetian couldn't help but look with glittering eyes at

the more than 90,000 soul spheres, and Bai Xiaochun.

“It’s protecting its food.... Mistress Red-Dust was just unlucky to send her divine sense over right in this moment. As for this Bai Xiaochun, how did he get his hands on so many vengeful souls...? He’s certainly full of secrets.” Over the years, Chen Hetian had secretly been paying close attention to Bai Xiaochun. Whether it was his Soul Convergence Pills or his exploding pill furnaces, he had watched over everything carefully. He had even sent some Soul Convergence Pills back to the sect for them to analyze. Of course, he had done all of these things very carefully; he knew that running investigations into members of the five legions was a sensitive task.

Even as Chen Hetian pondered these things, Bai Xiaochun grandly swished his sleeve.

“Open up!” he roared. Instantly, all of the 90,000 soul spheres vibrated before bursting open. Clouds of souls immediately poured out, filling the entire city and then pouring out beyond it.

30,000 meters. 300,000 meters. 3,000,000 meters. 30,000,000 meters.... In the blink of an eye, the cloud of souls spread out to cover all creation!

It was such a shocking event that it wasn’t just the cultivators of the five legions in Great Wall City who were astonished. Even people in World City noticed what was happening, and their expressions flickered in surprise.

It was the same in the Wildlands, where the savages and soul cultivators were completely flabbergasted.

“What’s going on!?”

“Heavens! What... what is that?!”

As the cloud of souls spread out, shocking everyone in the area, the eye atop the tower began to tremble as if in excitement. Then, bright rays of light erupted from the eye, almost as if the true spirit

felt that the previous absorption method was too slow, and that it needed... to come out into the open!!

The shining light rapidly converged down into a single point, which then flew out of the eye and transformed into a bat!

It was partially translucent, with bright red eyes, and after it came out into the open, it threw its head back and roared, causing an enormous, shadowy figure to appear in the sky above it.

That shadowy figure was also a bat, so big it filled the entire sky. As soon as it appeared, it took in a deep breath which caused heaven and earth to tremble as the cloud of souls began to move. They almost looked like tide waters as they moved inexorably toward the enormous bat.

The ordinary cultivators of the five legions were trembling in shock; never before had anyone been privy to the fact that there was a bat inside of the huge eye!!

Although Bai Lin and the other four generals had been aware of it, they had never personally seen it, and therefore, all of them were also gasping in astonishment.

Heaven and earth distorted as the massive cloud of souls was absorbed by the gigantic bat. The process took approximately two hours, after which the enormous shadowy bat looked around with cold but contented eyes. A moment later, it ignored everything else around and allowed its gaze to focus on Bai Xiaochun. Within that gaze was approval, and also a sort of newly-acquired closeness.

A moment later, the image of the bat transformed back into a dot of light that returned to the huge eye.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback by everything that had occurred, having never imagined the act of turning in a few souls would result in such a scene.

Now, he hovered there, heart racing amidst the quiet as all gazes shifted from the huge eye to him.

He blinked a few times, mind racing as he tried to come up with an explanation. Meanwhile, his identity medallion in his bag of holding began to vibrate with unprecedented intensity. Startled, Bai Xiaochun pulled out the medallion and scanned it, whereupon his eyes went wide.

“So many!!”

The battle credits in his identity medallion were currently skyrocketing. Within moments, it passed the point necessary to receive a promotion to major general, and still kept going. Soon, he had enough for two such promotions! Only then did the total begin to slow.

The staggering number of battle credits was such that Bai Xiaochun’s eyes nearly popped out of his skull. His heart began to beat rapidly, and although he wasn't actually sure exactly what he could get with so much battle credit, he was sure that it was definitely enough to become a major general.

Clearly, the true spirit in the huge eye was very pleased with him....

Bai Xiaochun looked excitedly at his battle credit, and forgot any plans of trying to explain the situation. Holding his identity medallion high above his head, he shouted, “I want a promotion to major general!”

The surrounding cultivators were stunned.

“What... what did he just say? Major general!?”

“Bai Xiaochun wants a promotion to major general?!?!”

“This is astonishing! Whether it was the cloud of souls, or the actions of the eye, or his request for a promotion, this... all of this... Heavens! Bai Xiaochun is definitely going to become a legend!!”

“He’s actually handing in souls to become a major general?”

In almost the same moment that the words left his mouth, the battle credit in his identity medallion was reduced by roughly half.

Then, blinding light shone out from the medallion, as Bai Xiaochun's rank as listed inside was altered. Before, he was a colonel, but now he was... a major general!

However, attached to the title was another word: acting.

After all, the rank of major general was a very important one, and was essentially the highest rank any ordinary cultivator could achieve within the five legions. The five generals and the deva patriarch all had to ratify the decision and submit it to the true spirit, whereupon a report would be sent to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Another factor to consider was that there were currently no open slots for major generals within the five legions. If a new major general were to be promoted, one of the previous major generals would have to be transferred away.

It was a complicated process that required numerous formalities. Therefore, when Bai Xiaochun spoke the words out loud, and the crowd began to clamor in response, Chen Hetian, Bai Lin, and the other generals immediately felt headaches coming on.

Sighing, Chen Hetian transmitted his thoughts to Bai Lin and the generals. "Well, what do you all think? How do we handle the situation?"

However, none of them had any idea what to do; this sudden turn of events had been completely unexpected.

If Bai Xiaochun had used some other means to rise through the ranks, they might not have needed to consider the matter. However, his actions had caught them completely unprepared. Not even Bai Lin, who had actually attempted to stoke Bai Xiaochun's ambitions in the first place, could ever have imagined that he would actually become a major general so quickly.

Much of their shock stemmed from the fact that from the moment the Great Wall had been built until now, Bai Xiaochun was the first person to ever hand in enough souls to be directly promoted to major general.

Seeing that nobody else was saying anything, Bai Lin braced himself and said, “Well, I think Bai Xiaochun clearly has the skills necessary. I don’t see any problem.”

“This is not children’s game!!” Chen Hetian replied angrily. The rank of major general was far too important to be taken lightly. However, there was no way to deny that Bai Xiaochun had earned it. Refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the promotion would be preposterous.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was not very happy. Unaware that Chen Hetian and the generals needed to approve the promotion, he couldn’t help but feel a bit irritated that he was listed as only an acting major general.

“Senior Bat, this isn’t very sincere of you!” he said loudly. “I gave you a whole bunch of souls! I mean... there were more than 1,000,000,000!! And you only made me an acting major general?!” Not willing to give up so easily, he raised his voice and continued, “If you act like this, then why should I turn in more souls later? And what about all the other Fellow Daoists here? Why should they turn in souls if they can’t trust that they’ll be rewarded properly?!” The huge eye glittered as if in thought. After a few breaths worth of time passed, and even before Chen Hetian and the others could finish discussing the matter... a message appeared within the identity medallions of all cultivators of the five legions.

“Bai Xiaochun has been promoted to the rank of major general!” The true spirit had gone over the heads of Chen Hetian and the generals to directly report the matter to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

Chapter 524: Taking Command of the 3rd Corps

“Major general?!” As news spread back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, people were initially taken aback, and then quickly sank into astonishment. Big Fatty Zhang had long since succeeded at forming his Will Core and had been taken in as an apprentice by the hallmaster of the hall of Devil Slayers. He was in the middle of a session of cultivation when the news came in, and was immediately enthused.

“Good job, Xiaochun!!”

Meanwhile, back at the Great Wall, the five legions were in an uproar. Earlier, they had heard Bai Xiaochun’s request, but hadn’t seen any confirmation that the promotion had been granted. But then, moments later, the message was sent out indicating that Bai Xiaochun had indeed become a major general!!

Bai Xiaochun was beside himself with joy as he looked at his identity medallion, and the word “acting” vanish from in front of his rank of major general. Very pleased with himself, he laughed loudly and said, “From this day on, Bai Xiaochun is a major general!!”

Chen Hetian, Bai Lin, and all the other generals were shocked. After exchanging glances, a strange expression appeared on Bai Lin’s face, and Chen Hetian looked up wryly at the true spirit in the huge eye.

Clearly, the promotion was the true spirit’s way of thanking Bai Xiaochun. After all, a huge amount of vengeful soul like that would be unprecedentedly useful to the true spirit.

In the end, Chen Hetian sighed and decided not to worry about the matter any more than necessary.

“Bai Lin,” he said, “considering that Bai Xiaochun is a Skin

Flayer, why don't you arrange for one of your current major generals to retire...." Then, he departed, shaking his head the entire way.

Seven days sped by in a blur. The entire time, Great Wall City was filled with talk of Bai Xiaochun handing in souls, and his promotion to major general. In fact, such stories would continue to persist for much longer than seven days.

Although countless cultivators were envious of what had happened, it also sparked hope in their hearts. Suddenly, they felt much more anticipation for the possibilities their own futures held.

Bai Xiaochun was extremely famous by this point. Although his name wasn't necessarily known among everyone in the three major cities within the Great Wall region, everyone in a position of power had heard of him.

Something else happened during the seven days which passed. The major general of the 3rd Corps, of which Bai Xiaochun's regiment was a part, was convinced by Bai Lin to return to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

That major general wasn't angry with Bai Xiaochun, but rather, quite grateful. He had been serving at the Great Wall for far many years, and upon returning to the sect, would become an elder in the Hall of Steel Veins. He would also be generously compensated by the sect for all the battle credit he had accumulated.

Although he would miss the Great Wall in some ways, going back to the sect was actually the best option for him. Normally speaking, major generals were such important people that they couldn't just leave the Great Wall whenever they wished. In fact, the other major generals were actually a bit envious.

Before leaving, he visited Bai Xiaochun to both express his thanks and also transfer his personal staff over for Bai Xiaochun to make use of. Bai Xiaochun was quite moved at the man's sincerity, and

guaranteed over and over again that he would treat the staff extremely fairly.

A few days after the old man left the Great Wall, Bai Xiaochun's official commission was handed down. He was now the major general of the 3rd Corps of the Skin Flayers!

The day the commission came down, Bai Xiaochun was trembling with excitement, and looked as proud as a rooster as he put on his intimidating, glittering major general's armor. The suit of armor had a built-in spell formation that, upon activation, instantly caused his entire person to blur and distort, as if intense, shocking energy were building up.

His hair even flew around him wildly for a moment before his features became clear again. With that, he pulled out his copper mirror to examine himself.

After preening for a long moment, he chuckled and said, "What do you say, little magic mirror? How do I look?"

Imposter Nightcrypt's soul appeared within the mirror, holding back a sigh as he put a shocked expression onto his face.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was elated by his response.

After a long moment passed, imposter Nightcrypt seemed to recover from his shock, and then began to praise Bai Xiaochun in very exaggerated fashion.

"Heavens! Sir, are you really the imposing, handsome, carefree, and consummate chosen Bai Xiaochun? Impossible! The exalted Bai Xiaochun, who in my heart is a figure who shines more brightly than the sun itself, is clearly a colonel!"

Although Bai Xiaochun was very pleased by this, he hid his smile behind a blank face and said, "Alright, enough with the flattery. Do you really think Bai Xiaochun the kind of person who likes to be brown-nosed? I wanted your opinion on whether or not the armor fits properly!"

Imposter Nightcrypt rolled his eyes inwardly, well aware that if he did as Bai Xiaochun had actually asked, and stopped flattering him, then Bai Xiaochun would punish him.

“I don’t like brown-nosing either,” imposter Nightcrypt said. “Nobody in this world does!” Inwardly, he was filled with disdain, but didn’t show that. Instead, he continued to flatter Bai Xiaochun for the time it takes an incense stick to burn before actually getting around to answering the initial question.

“That armor was made specifically for you, wasn’t it? It fits perfectly! Although, I do have to say that the reason it looks so intimidating isn’t because of the armor itself, but because of how you wear it!” Hearing imposter Nightcrypt’s boot-licking was one of Bai Xiaochun’s favorite pastimes, and he truly admired his way with words. Finally, he cleared his throat, tossed some medicinal pills into the copper mirror, and then somberly walked out of his residence.

Outside, the 10,000 cultivators of the 3rd Corps were all standing at attention. As soon as Bai Xiaochun appeared, Zhao Long stepped forward and shouted, “3rd Corps, hand salute!”

As soon as the words left Zhao Long’s mouth, the 10,000 cultivators clasped hands and bowed deeply. “Greetings, Major General!”

When they shouted their greeting, their words echoed about as loudly as thunder.

Seeing 10,000 people lined up in front of him caused Bai Xiaochun to sigh inwardly and think back to how he had come to Great Wall City all by himself, and had climbed from the rank of lieutenant to captain, and then colonel. Now, here he was at the very pinnacle, a major general.

The mere thought of how much work he had put into becoming a major general left him sighing ceaselessly.

Finally, he waved his hand and said, “Very well, let’s go for a bit of a walk.”

With that, his thousand-man regiment from before stepped forward and fell into ranks around him to act as his personal guard. At the same time, the ten colonels under his command also stepped forward.

As they flew up into the air, the rest of the corps spread out to clear a path and make sure no one got too close.

Bai Xiaochun felt extremely excited to be so awe-inspiring, and was very pleased that all of his hard work had paid off. He even made sure to proceed along slowly so everyone could look at him, and also took time to chat with his colonels. The cautious way they carried out conversation with him left him very pleased.

Quite a few people noticed that he was parading through the city. Some time back, he had done the same thing as a colonel, but this time, he was a major general.

The news that Bai Xiaochun had been commissioned as the major general of the 3rd Corps of the Skin Flayers was big news in the Wildlands. Intelligence regarding him was actually very important in general there. Whether it was his exploding pill furnaces or his Soul Convergence Pills, everything he did seemed to hurt them.

When the news reached Mistress Red-Dust in her command tent, she looked at the intelligence report before crushing the jade slip.

“So that’s what happened the other day,” she said. “Bai Xiaochun turned in souls to get battle credit, which then earned him a promotion to major general.” Kneeling in front of her was a necromancer in a gray robe, whose cultivation base fluctuations placed him in the Nascent Soul level.

“According to the information from our spies,” he said, “that’s exactly what happened. More specifically, Bai Xiaochun handed in more than 1,000,000,000 souls....” Even the necromancer almost

couldn't believe the number he had just spoken out loud.

"1,000,000,000...." Mistress Red-Dust murmured, her eyes flickering with cold light. After a moment, she waved her hand. "Send down orders to put Bai Xiaochun in 5th place on the Execution List. Increase the bounty on his head to two deva beast souls!

"Yes ma'am!" the necromancer said with a somber nod of his head. With that, he left.

Before long, word spread to Great Wall City that Bai Xiaochun was now in 5th place on the Wildlands Execution List, and that the reward for killing him had increased to two deva beast souls. When Bai Xiaochun heard the news, he was quite shocked.

"How ruthless of them...." he thought. He almost couldn't believe that the Wildlands hated him so much that they were willing to pay two deva beast souls to see him dead.

Chapter 525: Proud Song Que

“If things keep going on like this,” Bai Xiaochun thought, “I wonder if they’ll increase the reward to an actual deva soul one day?” After thinking about the frightening implications for a moment, he buried such thoughts and then decided that he would never again take a single step outside the Great Wall on his own.

“Hmmmph! If I do have to go out, I’ll take my entire 10,000-man corps with me. I refuse to believe that anyone in the Wildlands can kill me with them around! Of course, there might be some spies among the cultivators here, but I’m in the middle of Great Wall City after all!” Such reasoning left him feeling a bit comforted, but not completely.

“Wait a second. My cultivation base is still too low. I’m only in the great circle of the Gold Core stage. If I want to make a breakthrough, I’ll at least need a full set of deva beast souls. Metal, wood, water, fire, earth....” Although he still had a lot of battle credit, he definitely didn’t have enough to trade for a deva beast soul.

Furthermore, if he wanted to trade in one of his deva souls, he would have to wait until he was back in the sect. To pull a deva soul out by the Great Wall would be too risky.

“Maybe I can’t increase my cultivation base, but I can definitely make some progress with my Undying Live Forever Technique!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun took out a jade slip, filled out a list of certain items he needed, and passed it off to Zhao Long to take care of.

Now that Bai Xiaochun was a major general, he had a lot of special privileges. Not only could he post simple missions without needing any authorization, but he could also make requests for supplies.

Of course, considering how much battle credit he had, he didn’t

want to take advantage of his position, so he also gave Zhao Long plenty of resources to purchase the necessary items.

Before long, Zhao Long returned with the precious materials he had requested. Then, Bai Xiaochun announced that he would be going into secluded meditation, whereupon he began to cultivate his Undying Live Forever Technique.

“This time I can’t hold anything back. I have to get my Undying Live Forever Technique to the great circle of the third level!” Taking a deep breath, he pulled out an earthspirit tuber and popped it into his mouth. As the life force within the tuber began to course through him, he closed his eyes and began to work with his Undying Live Forever Technique.

Almost immediately, that life force transformed into streams of heat that flowed toward his head, where they began to take the shape of Undying Tendons.

His work required focus and concentration, and couldn’t be rushed. Thankfully, he had so much battle credit that it was easy to get the precious materials he required. Time passed. Before long, a year had gone by.

That year was mostly spent in quiet cultivation. Bai Xiaochun rarely appeared out in the open, and therefore, the talk about the events leading up to his promotion gradually began to die down.

Another half a year went by, and the talk died down even more. One day when Bai Xiaochun was sitting there cross-legged in his secluded meditation facilities, his eyes snapped open, and it almost looked like lightning was crackling within them.

Settling his breathing, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then waved his hands out in front of him. Instantly, all of the precious materials arrayed in front of him shattered into dust.

Then, the dust clumped together and flew into his mouth, sucked

away in an instant.

Boundless life force erupted out inside of him, which Bai Xiaochun immediately sent flowing toward his head.

By this point, the Undying Tendons in his head were more than ninety percent complete, with only a tiny fraction remaining incomplete. It was almost like a huge door that needed to be slammed at with great force before it could open.

As Bai Xiaochun was completely focused on achieving a major breakthrough with the third level of the Undying Live Forever Technique, it was high noon outside, and the sun was shining down hot and bright onto the lands outside the Great Wall.

Some distance away, the same black pillar of light could still be seen shining up into the sky. It was something the cultivators of the five legions had grown used to in the more than one year since it had appeared. Although many people had been dispatched to gather information about it, nothing conclusive had ever been determined.

The only thing that was clear was that the necropolis was huge, and filled with the skeletons of many shocking beasts. Other than that, it appeared to be empty.

However, neither the Wildlands nor the Great Wall forces were willing to give up on trying to uncover its secrets. They were constantly trying to uncover new information. It was because of that that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect issued orders that all of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars were required to investigate the location at least once.

Therefore, all of the various chosen who had scattered in different directions over the years were forced at some point to head in the direction of Great Wall City.

During the year and half that Bai Xiaochun was in secluded meditation, quite a few people passed through Great Wall City on

their way outside to investigate the necropolis.

When it came to Bai Xiaochun, only the Hall of Steel Veins could give him orders, and naturally, they wouldn't order him to do something like that.

Currently, there was a group of three chosen outside of the Great Wall, all of them disguised as soul cultivators. One was a beautiful woman, one was a gaunt middle-aged fellow in mid Core Formation, and the third was a strapping young man with a murderous aura so strong it made him seem completely unapproachable.

At the same time, though, there was something about him that made people trust him and not hesitate to follow his orders. His eyes were profoundly cold, making him look like a sheathed sword just waiting to strike. Clearly, he was the type of person who no one would be willing to provoke casually.

Quite a few vicious-looking scars could be seen on him, but instead of diminishing his appearance, they actually served to make him even more attractive to female cultivators.

If Bai Xiaochun were here, he would recognize this young man in an instant. He was none other than Song Que!

As soon as the group of three caught sight of the Great Wall, the beautiful young woman sighed and said, "Finally back!"

The middle-aged cultivator was clearly moved as well. "Who would have thought that our journey would take three years? Without you, Brother Song, I'm afraid we would have ended up dead and buried in the Wildlands."

He would never forget the events which had unfolded over the past three years. At the outset, their group had numbered more than ten. However, on their very first mission they ended up stranded in a very dangerous location, unable to send messages requesting backup, and also cut off from news about what was

happening on the outside.

They had been trapped in that danger zone together with a large group of savages and soul cultivators. Despite the fact that the two groups were from the Wildlands and the Great Wall respectively, no major conflicts had broken out at first. However, as time progressed, the situation devolved into open fighting.

It was Song Que who had combined force and charm to bring the situation under control. By winning over the savages and the soul cultivators, he had managed to direct the efforts of the entire group into finding a way out of the trap.

As for his two companions, they felt like they had survived a huge catastrophe, and they couldn't help but feel respect and gratitude toward Song Que for how he had helped them.

The young woman looked over enviously at him and said, "That's right, Big Bro Song. With everything you've accomplished, you'll definitely be able to achieve a meteoric rise. I wouldn't be surprised if you get into the top 10 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. In fact, considering your current battle prowess, you probably already qualify to tangle with the current top 10."

Song Que smiled faintly and didn't bother to act modestly. Even he was convinced that his three bitter years in the Wildlands had turned him into a completely different person.

He had achieved a cultivation base breakthrough, and was currently in late Core Formation. Furthermore, thanks to certain secret magics of the Blood Stream Division, he now possessed enough battle prowess that he had been able to kill a soul cultivator in the great circle of Core Formation.

Such an accomplishment was definitely worthy of pride. He could well imagine what it would be like to get inside the Great Wall, and go back to World City. At that point, he would surely be one of the best of the best among the chosen.

“Even if some of the others stumbled into good fortune, none of them could compare to me!” Another source of pride was the fact that during the three years in which he had been in the Wildlands, he hadn’t accomplished only three missions, but rather seven. All of them had been completed within the danger zone that he had ended up trapped in. Furthermore, because he had personally united the cultivators and the Wildlanders, he had also made valuable connections with people in the Wildlands.

Although he hadn’t acquired a deva beast soul, he had managed to get more than 300 Nascent Soul-level souls, each and every one of which could be sold for a significant profit.

Most importantly of all, he had uncovered some clues as to the location of a deva beast soul. Not even his two companions were aware of that, only him.

His current plan was to finish out his first five years of the trial finishing missions, improving his cultivation base, and exploring the Wildlands. The final five years would be devoted to reaching the great circle of Core Formation, and searching for a deva beast soul.

“Considering my accomplishments in battle and the missions I've completed, it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find someone who has surpassed me. Hmmmmph. From what I heard a few years ago, Bai Xiaochun got stuck in Great Wall City doing work as an apothecary.”

Chapter 526: New Major General

Song Que chuckled coldly, convinced that this time, he would soon be crushing Bai Xiaochun ten times over. He could even visualize himself stomping Bai Xiaochun underfoot and forcing him to beg for mercy.

“You dare to call yourself my uncle?! Well this time I’m going to make you call me grandfather!” The thought of Bai Xiaochun groveling mournfully filled Song Que’s vicious heart with pleasant warmth.

Of course, he had received absolutely no news about Bai Xiaochun’s escapades in Great Wall City. After his three years in isolation from the world, he had rushed directly back toward the Great Wall, with no way of knowing how much things had changed.

It was with a heart surging with pride that Song Que finally arrived at the Great Wall and laid eyes on the enormous spell formation shield. Of course, before he and his group could even get close to the shield, cold gazes filled with killing intent locked onto them.

Then, an icy voice rang out from the wall.

“Who goes there?!”

Song Que’s expression flickered, and he suppressed the arrogance in his heart as he stopped in place. No matter how incredible he thought himself outside the wall, now that he was back here, he didn’t dare to do anything rash.

After all, he was absolutely not in a place to be able to provoke the five legions. Behind him, his two companions stopped in place, their faces ashen.

Clasping hands respectfully, Song Que called out, “Sir, I am your humble servant Song Que. These two friends of mine are fellow

disciples of the sect. We are returning from running missions on the outside, and would like to request entrance into Great Wall City.”

The person who had spoken from the wall moments ago was none other than Zhao Long, who happened to be on duty at the moment. Of course, he was a member of the Skin Flayers’ 3rd Corps, and one of Bai Xiaochun’s private guards. Considering that Bai Xiaochun was in secluded meditation at the moment, most matters relating to the 3rd Corps were handled by him and the ten colonels.

Zhao Long looked Song Que and his companions over, and after a moment, his gaze softened. After all, he was aware that Bai Xiaochun came from the sect headquarters, as did these chosen, and that it was possible they could all know each other. Waving his hand, he sent some cultivators flying out to retrieve the group’s identity medallions and excursion permits for inspection.

Zhao Long himself looked over the medallions, using a special technique to confirm that there was nothing suspicious about them. Then he checked the jade slips that were the excursion permits, which were required of any cultivator who left the wall. Whenever a cultivator went outside, the soldiers of whichever legion was on duty at the time would stamp the permit. Upon return, if the soldiers of a different legion were on duty, then the permit would need to be sent to the original legion for verification.

However, Zhao Long could tell at a glance that their verification stamps were from the 3rd Corps of the Skin Flayers. The only difference was that they had been issued during the command of the previous major general. According to the rules and customs of the five legions, whenever a new major general took command, new verification stamps would need to be created.

Zhao Long looked up and said, “Your identity medallions are authentic. However, let me remind you that once you enter the city, the spell formation will lock onto your identity medallion. If

your true identity does not match up with the information in the medallion, if you are an impersonator or have been possessed, then you will be instantly killed in body and soul!”

Song Que and his companions were a bit taken aback, but after exchanging glances and nodding, they proceeded forward. This was the first time for any of the three of them to return to Great Wall City after going outside, and therefore it was impossible for them to avoid being nervous. After all, it was impossible to say how many cold, murderous gazes atop the wall were fixed on them.

Soon, they were passing through the spell formation. Rippling fluctuations appeared that scanned them thoroughly, then slowly faded away. After that, they found themselves standing there beneath the wall.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Song Que looked up at the figures atop the wall, and was suddenly struck with the impulse to join the five legions.

After the many spectacular things he had accomplished on the outside, joining the five legions didn't seem like a bad choice, or anything particularly difficult.

Seeing that the group had passed through the spell formation with no problems, Zhao Long smiled faintly and then issued orders for the side door to be opened. When the group actually entered the door, they found Zhao Long waiting for them on the other side.

Clasping hands in greetings, Zhao Long smiled and said, “That inspection was a necessary formality, Fellow Daoists, I hope you weren't offended.”

A moment later, his gaze came to rest on Song Que, who was clearly the most exceptional of the group, and who he deemed worthy to try to recruit.

Song Que smiled in response. He could tell that Zhao Long

seemed to be singling him out, and it already felt wonderful. Obviously, Zhao Long was no ordinary soldier, so Song Que clasped hands respectfully and then began to chat amiably. Before long, they even exchanged names.

Now that they knew each other a bit better, Zhao Long said, “Brother Song, are you interested in joining the Skin Flayers?”

“Um....” Although Song Que was actually very pleased to be asked this question, he put a look of hesitation onto his face.

From what Zhao Long could tell, Song Que was quite a talented individual, and therefore, he had decided to try to recruit him for Bai Xiaochun. Facial expression warm, he said, “Don’t worry, you don’t need to make a decision right away. Take some time to think about it, and tell me your answer later. By the way, the three of you will need to update your excursion permit stamps.

“Your current stamp was issued by our 3rd Corps, but a new major general recently took command. The three of you will need to come with me to the garrison to update your stamps.”

“A new major general?!” Song Que exclaimed. His two companions exchanged a shocked glance. Although they weren’t very familiar with the Great Wall, they knew that major generals were extremely important people, and that such a change in command didn’t happen every day!

Song Que didn't dare to do anything rash. Of course, he would go so far as to chat casually with Zhao Long, but when it came to a major general, he wouldn't do anything even remotely offensive. He was well aware that the cultivators of the five legions, who lived their lives to defend the Great Wall, were the most terrifying of individuals. That was especially true of their major generals, all of whom were exalted figures who could shake heaven and earth.

Even though Song Que viewed himself as chosen, in front of a major general, he would be like a bug. The mere thought of what it must be like to be a major general caused him to sigh.

“I wonder if I, Song Que, might one day have a chance to reach a lofty position like that of major general.” Although such thoughts left him slightly discouraged, he forced himself to be optimistic, and also reminded himself that although he might not have come back as mighty as a major general, he was still vastly beyond anyone else in his generation. He was also looking very much forward to encountering Bai Xiaochun, whom he would instantly stomp underfoot. When that happened, he would make sure Bai Xiaochun knew what a real chosen was like!

Such thoughts made his heart blossom with delight, and he almost couldn't wait to finish handling the formalities regarding his excursion permit so that he could go find Bai Xiaochun!

He immediately nodded to Zhao Long, as did his companions, and moments later, the three of them were heading to the garrison of the 3rd Corps.

Along the way, Song Que thought about asking for more details about the major general, but then decided not to. Instead, he gave a meaningful look to his female companion. The two of them had been working together for quite some time, and therefore, she immediately picked up on the hint and took it upon herself to make some inquiries.

“Who exactly is the new major general?” she asked.

“You don't know?” Zhao Long said. Chuckling, he continued, “Well, I don't want to say too much. Who knows, maybe you and the major general already know each other.”

With that, the conversation topic was ended, and Song Que and his companions were left more curious than before.

As Song Que and his companions were having their stamps updated, Bai Xiaochun happened to reach a critical moment in his cultivation. After absorbing all of the precious materials, his eyes gleamed with determination as he gritted his teeth and felt the power of the energy flowing through his qi passageways.

The rippling fluctuations turned into mighty waves that raged up to the top of his head, transforming into something like a heavenly water dragon that then shot through the final qi passageway in his head.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

No one but Bai Xiaochun could hear the intense sounds battering his mind. At the same time, he began to tremble violently, and even heard cracking sounds entering his ears.

It was almost as if a door had been opened by the intense life force, whereupon Bai Xiaochun let out a roar and performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, more precious materials were crushed and then breathed in through his mouth.

As the final qi passageway in his head shattered, allowing the life force to rage freely through his entire body, he suddenly sensed something like a seal or weight pressing down on him with mountain-like force. It actually felt quite uncomfortable.

It was almost like something completely suppressing him. Although he had never been able to detect this specific pressure before, it now pervaded his consciousness. Furthermore, it was something the likes of which he had sensed twice before in the past, when working with the Undying Skin and Undying Heavenly King.

As of this moment, he had made contact with... “The third shackle!”

Chapter 527: You're The Major General!

“The next step is to figure out a way to break through it!” Taking a deep breath, Bai Xiaochun reined in the life force, whereupon his entire body began to glow with black light.

At the same time, an intense fleshly body power coursed through him, to the point where simply clenching his fist caused cracking sounds to explode out.

Most shocking of all was the speed he was now capable of. Eyes flickering, he waved his sleeve to open his secluded meditation room, and then took a step out.

The instant his foot fell, he vanished. Although it almost seemed like a teleportation, it wasn't. It was just incredible speed that instantly took him out of the room and up into the air above.

As he hovered there in the air above the 3rd Corps' garrison, he realized that a bird was flying in front of him, its wings beating very slowly, a look of shock on its face. Then he looked around and noticed that everything around him seemed to be moving in slow motion.

It was a shocking feeling, and immediately led him to the realization that the speed he was now capable of was so great that it bordered on teleportation.

“Once you get fast enough, everything gets slow?” he murmured. Because he was now hovering in one place and not moving, everything quickly returned to normal.

It was at that exact same moment that Zhao Long led Song Que and his two companions in through the main gate of the garrison. As they did, they saw a tall, slender figure hovering in the air above them, radiating shocking energy that made him seem like some devilish god....

Just as they were looking up at that devilish god, Bai Xiaochun

looked down and saw Song Que.

Instantly, their gazes locked....

Song Que's eyes went wide, and he gasped, then quickly looked down. Closing his eyes, he told himself that he had just been seeing things, most likely because of how he had been thinking about crushing Bai Xiaochun recently.

"That's definitely it," he told himself. "Just seeing things...."

However, even as he struggled to get himself under control, Bai Xiaochun enthusiastically shouted, "Que'er!"

Bai Xiaochun was so excited he was trembling, and his eyes were shining as brightly as if they were on fire.

As for Song Que, as soon as he heard "Que'er," his mind was shaken into emptiness. Any endeavors to convince himself that he had been seeing things vanished into absolute nothingness.

His attempts to prevent himself from trembling left him looking very stiff and unnatural as he stood there with a blank look on his face, feeling like he was being struck by endless bolts of lightning.

Bai Xiaochun began to laugh heartily as he dropped down to the ground and then began to hurry over toward Song Que and his two companions.

It was only at this point that the other cultivators of the 3rd Corps realized that their major general had emerged from meditation. Instantly, the cultivators who made up his personal guard began to fly over in beams of light.

The first person to reach him was the beautiful Liu Li, accompanied by others of his private guard, who clustered around him and saluted respectfully.

"Congratulations on emerging from meditation, exalted one!"

Looking very serious, Zhao Long walked a few steps away from Song Que and his companions, then clasped hands and bowed

deeply.

“Congratulations on emerging from meditation, exalted one!”

Looking very pleased at the words of congratulations being offered by his personal guard, he hurried up to Song Que.

Meanwhile, other cultivators in the garrison realized that Bai Xiaochun was out of secluded meditation, whereupon dozens upon dozens of beams of light began to fly in his direction.

Ten of the beams of light surged with the aura of the great circle of Core Formation, and also radiated profound dignity. They were people who, in any other circumstance, would dominate any area they entered.

They were the colonels of the 3rd Corps, including Li Hongming. All of them approached and offered respectful greetings.

“Greetings, Major General!”

As more and more people arrived and saluted in greeting, Bai Xiaochun came to stand in front of Song Que, his eyes shining with excitement. Everyone in the area could sense how happy he was.

“It’s really you, Que’er. It’s really you!! How did you get yourself in such a bad situation, Que’er? I mean, I thought I had it bad, but obviously, you have it way worse than me.

“When we left, your aunt entrusted your safety to me. As your Senior, that’s simply my responsibility. Although you mercilessly cast me to the side in the past, as your uncle, I can be magnanimous when necessary. How about this: forget about going out and doing missions. You stick with me. I’m a major general now, and you can be one of my personal guards!”

Bai Xiaochun really was excited to be reunited with an old friend. Of course, it was all the better considering how arrogant Song Que had acted upon parting ways. Furthermore, although Bai Xiaochun was very happy to be a major general, he wouldn’t be able to return to the River-Defying Sect any time soon, and it was a bit

disappointing to have no old friends around to bask in his glory. Therefore, he was so excited right now he felt like he could explode; it was really one of the most incomparable feelings in the world.

Song Que's two companions were clearly in a state of shock as they looked at Bai Xiaochun. Although the clothing he wore was relatively simple, it somehow made him look very impressive. He was almost like the bright moon surrounded by countless lesser, faintly twinkling stars. There was something about him that just seemed innately superior. Although he clearly wasn't in the Nascent Soul stage, he seemed even more terrifying than if he was. Then they heard everyone calling him major general, and their minds began to spin as they realized that this person in front of them was none other than the major general of the 3rd Corps! Complex, indecipherable emotions immediately began to overwhelm them!!

Furthermore, they immediately recognized that he was Bai Xiaochun. After all, they were all chosen from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, and it would have been harder for Bai Xiaochun to be more famous than he was among their number. They almost couldn't believe what they were seeing in front of their very eyes, and could do little more than gasp in anxiety. Plus, it was all made even more shocking because this was the first time they had heard that Song Que had such a shocking background. His uncle was a major general!!

Trembling, they subconsciously bowed their heads, clasped hands, and offered greetings.

“Greetings, Major General, greetings.”

A blank look could be seen in Song Que's eyes as this happened. Everything was developing too quickly, and there was no way he could have prepared himself for this turn of events. Just moments ago, he had been reveling in thoughts of how incredible he himself was, and how he would heap humiliation onto Bai Xiaochun. And

now, here Bai Xiaochun was standing right in front of him as a major general....

Face ashen, Song Que began to stammer, “Bai Xiaochun... how is this even possible? Y-you... you actually became a major general?!”

He could hardly bring himself to believe that it was true; it was almost as if his life were a huge comedy playing out.

However, as soon as the words left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun’s personal guards began to frown, clearly not happy at all. Liu Li even let out a cold harrumph. They were crack troops who served a famous officer, and their murderous auras immediately began to rage, crushing down onto Song Que and his companions.

“How dare you use the major general’s personal name!” Zhao Long shouted. “You can’t just call him by name whenever you wish!”

Although he approved of Song Que in general, the fact that he would question his commanding officer in this way caused him to immediately lose his temper.

Li Hongming and the other colonels were also frowning in displeasure, to the point where killing intent rose up in their eyes. In fact, the entire garrison suddenly became like a hulking beast, staring at the three newcomers as if they were about to consume them!

The sight of so many glares being cast at them caused Song Que and his two companions’ hearts to pound on the verge of bursting. As for the young woman, she immediately flopped to the ground to kowtow, to be joined moments later by the middle-aged man. Based on the intense murderous auras around them, they were certain that if they didn’t do so, they would be killed in body and soul!

Song Que was trembling, and his face was ashen. He could sense the intensity of the murderous auras just as the other two could,

and yet, he wasn't afraid. Instead, he just stood there staring at Bai Xiaochun, his grief and indignation pushing aside all other thoughts, and his frustration building to the point where it threatened to inundate him like flood waters.

“This is impossible... it's simply impossible....”

Chapter 528: He's Just A Kid

Song Que thought back to the first day he had met Bai Xiaochun, and everything which had happened since then. Bai Xiaochun had always been there, hanging over him like thunderclouds of misfortune, impossible to dispel.

Back in the Fallen Sword Abyss, Bai Xiaochun snatched his heavenstring energy. Then in the Blood Stream Sect, he stole away the position of blood master. Later, he seized control of the lofty title of junior patriarch. Each and every time, Song Que found himself outmaneuvered and defeated.

After coming to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he had mustered his courage and fought on his own as hard as he could, only to be outdone again.

The same thing happened on the huge battleship. Later, after arriving in a strange land, he had unleashed every scrap of his explosive potential, all in the hopes of rising to prominence. When he did, he would finally crush Bai Xiaochun and put him in his place, make him kneel on the ground, and then crush him underfoot!

Even in this moment, he could still envision himself stepping on Bai Xiaochun's chest, shoving his finger in his face, and yelling, "From now on, whenever you see me, you'll grovel your way off into the distance!"

And yet, such a thing could only happen in his dreams. Yet again, Song Que found himself being crushed, and not just by a little bit. He was being crushed to a heaven-rending, earth-shattering degree, by a major general!

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Song Que's grief and indignation reached the point where tears began to roll down his cheeks.

Startled at seeing tears on Song Que's face, Bai Xiaochun spun around and yelled, "What are you people doing? Get rid of those murderous auras! This is my dear nephew! What are you doing trying to frighten him? He's just a kid!"

Then, he turned and gave Song Que a warm look, and even reached out to tousle his hair.

When Song Que heard Bai Xiaochun call him a kid, veins began to bulge out on his neck and face.

"Bai Xiaochun!!" he roared. Then, blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he toppled backward onto the ground, unconscious.

This was actually the second time he had passed out in Bai Xiaochun's presence. The first time was back in Sky City in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect....

Song Que woke up the next morning. After looking around grimly, he gritted his teeth and prepared to leave. However, as soon as he walked out the door, three cultivators appeared in his path. The one in the lead position was Zhao Long, who leveled a cold stare in his direction.

"The major general went back into secluded meditation. Before he did, he passed down orders to conscript you into service. From now on, you're one of the major general's personal guards. You will accept this assignment!"

A snarl immediately appeared on Song Que's lips.

"Remember your place, Song Que," Zhao Long continued. "In any other corps of the army, you would have been executed on the spot for the impudence you showed yesterday. Thankfully for you, the major general took pity on you for old time's sake. Not only did he not punish you, but he also rewarded you by placing you in his personal guard, under my command! From now on, disrespect toward the major general will not be tolerated at all!"

"If you continue to act arrogantly, then for the sake of the major

general, I'll be forced to put you to death!" Zhao Long hadn't consulted Bai Xiaochun regarding the last part of his speech. After all, he knew that there was a special relationship between the two of them. However, as the leader of Bai Xiaochun's personal guard, there were some matters that were better to nip in the bud. If it turned out that Song Que didn't know what was good for him, Zhao Long would definitely risk Bai Xiaochun's wrath by putting him to death!

He had been following Bai Xiaochun for years now, and therefore, viewed Bai Xiaochun's honor and glory as his own responsibility, and would brook no violations against it!

Song Que could see the killing intent in Zhao Long's eyes, and could sense the intimidating, murderous intentions within him.

A tremor passed through him as he realized that everything Zhao Long had just said was no mere threat or exaggeration....

Another half a month went by, and despite his reluctance, Song Que was getting used to being one of Bai Xiaochun's personal guards.

During that half month, Bai Xiaochun spent time stabilizing his Undying Live Forever Technique. At this point, he was at his absolute peak both in terms of fleshly body and cultivation base. Most importantly, he had become more familiar with his ability to move at such incredible speed that the world slowed down around him.

After emerging from secluded meditation, he headed to his private office in the 3rd Corps to get the latest briefings from his colonels.

Bai Xiaochun knew that since he was a major general, he had to listen very carefully to the reports. The last to report in was Zhao Long, who explained everything that had occurred in Great Wall City and within the 3rd Corps recently.

The beautiful Liu Li stood behind Bai Xiaochun, kneading his shoulders. She had been one of Bai Xiaochun's personal guards for years now, and generally had a cold and icy demeanor. However, whenever Bai Xiaochun was exhausted, she wouldn't hesitate to give him a soothing massage.

"Up to now, more than a hundred huge caves have been discovered inside the necropolis. Each one is filled with terrifying skeletons. Two deva beast souls were found there, and big battles erupted because of them. One of them was taken by our side, another was won by the Wildlands.

"More news came in about half a month ago. Beneath the necropolis with the hundred caves, there is another terrifying area that no one has discovered how to enter yet." With that, Zhao Long concluded his report. Then he casually added one more item.

"The new member of your personal guard, Song Que, has been performing satisfactorily. However, he has a bit of a rebellious side, and sometimes refuses to follow orders. As such, sir, I was planning to send him to the necropolis out in the Wildlands to learn a thing or two."

Bai Xiaochun shook his head and smiled. "No, no, don't do anything to put him in real danger. I'm his uncle, you know. Besides, it's normal for kids to be headstrong sometimes. How about this: I'm planning to go take a trip to World City in a few days. Now that I'm the major general of the 3rd Corps, it's my responsibility to conscript some new chosen to join our ranks." Actually, Bai Xiaochun had been planning to do this for some time now. After what had occurred with Song Que, he thirsted to see more eyes bulging out of the faces of people who knew him.

Zhao Long immediately started to get nervous, and was even thinking of trying to persuade Bai Xiaochun to change his mind. In the end, however, he simply voiced his assent, and went off to make special preparations to ensure that Bai Xiaochun was kept safe.

Although it wouldn't be possible to take the entire 3rd Corps on the trip, Zhao Long did have the authority to select five colonels, along with their five regiments, a total of roughly 5,000 soldiers.

A few days later, Bai Xiaochun submitted a request via jade slip to Bai Lin, asking for permission to go to World City for a recruitment drive. For a major general to leave the city like this was a major event, so obviously, a general had to sign off on it ahead of time.

Upon reading the request in the jade slip, Bai Lin understood immediately that Bai Xiaochun wanted to go show off a bit, and make sure his companions realized how incredible he was. The truth was that Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only person who had ever done a thing like that. Even many colonels would do the same type of thing.

Considering what he knew about Bai Xiaochun's personality, Bai Lin decided that he might as well just directly approve the request. In fact, he even transmitted some information to Bai Xiaochun, not only giving him some warnings about what to avoid, but teaching him a few things about how to successfully accomplish his goals. Bai Xiaochun was initially shocked, but then realized that it merely went to show how experienced Bai Lin was.

"We're here on the front lines," Bai Lin said, "so the people in World City will definitely be ready to shower you with praise and even gifts. However, don't push things too far...." He went on to offer a few more words of wisdom before finally approving Bai Xiaochun's request.

Another two days passed, and after all of the formalities were taken care of, the gates of Great Wall City opened, and a procession of thousands of black-armored cultivators emerged to head in the direction of the Heavenspan Sea. Right in the middle of all of them, of course, was Bai Xiaochun.

He wore a golden suit of armor, and looked remarkably

intimidating. With the proud wave of an arm, he sent his men into motion.

Zhao Long and Liu Li flanked him, and Song Que was also there, albeit begrudgingly. The colonels had arranged for the troops to fly through the air in tight formation, and scouts had been sent ahead to make sure they didn't stumble into danger. Everything had been set up to protect Bai Xiaochun and crush anything that got in their way.

Even from a great distance, it was possible to detect the heaven-shaking, earth-shattering murderous aura that radiated out from the group!

Song Que was actually a bit nervous as he looked around at the troops around him. He had come to a better understanding of Great Wall cultivators recently, and it was to his despair that he had come to realize that a group like this could eradicate him in the blink of an eye. He wouldn't even be able to make them pause in their tracks.

What left him even more unsettled was that the entire group would leap to obey any command Bai Xiaochun gave them.

There were even Nascent Soul cultivators within that group of 5,000, including some of the colonels. This was roughly half of the entire 3rd Corps, and wherever they went outside of Great Wall City, vicious animals and plants alike would tremble and not dare to get close.

Not even the bizarre cloudgyres would dare to appear in front of 5,000 cultivators from Great Wall City.

Thus, not a single obstacle at all blocked their path as they drew closer and closer to World City.

Chapter 529: The Riches Of World City

When Bai Xiaochun originally made the trip from World City to the Great Wall, he had been with Zhao Tianjiao and the others. Because of the incredible dangers they had faced, their small group hadn't been capable of much speed on their journey.

But now he was traveling through the same area with an army at his command. Furthermore, they had spell formations to increase their speed. Therefore, it was less than a month later that the group of roughly 5,000 cultivators saw an enormous city rising up on the horizon.

It was a city that seemed to abound with murky darkness, and was none other than World City!

The cultivators of the five legions who were camped in World City were there as a backup in case Great Wall City fell. If that happened, they would provide the bulk of the force which would counter attack.

Because Bai Xiaochun was a major general, news of his arrival had been previously announced to the garrison in World City. As such, there were numerous cultivators lined up in formation roughly five kilometers outside the city, waiting to receive him.

Furthermore, the city magistrate, as well as the leaders of the other major organizations in the city, were all present. After all, a major general was the type of person that anyone would view with the utmost importance. Of course, the city magistrate had been directly appointed to his position by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, but not even he would be willing to sow hostility with the legions due to an act of negligence.

The garrison in World City had four major generals, and they were all on their best behavior. Despite being the same rank as Bai Xiaochun, he was from the front lines, which meant that they didn't quite measure up to him in terms of status. They had

worked their way up through the ranks because of their administrative abilities, and were much more suited to the peaceful World City than the brutal front lines of battle.

At the moment, well over a thousand people were waiting for Bai Xiaochun, roughly half of whom were from the five legions, with the other half being made up of the forces of the city magistrate and other powerful organizations.

Most of them were whispering in hushed tones about the new major general, on his way to recruit troops.

“It’s definitely a bad thing for us that this guy is coming!”

“That’s right. Normally, they only send colonels here from Great Wall City. Plus, this guy was just promoted. He wouldn’t be here unless it was on some important mission.”

“Do you guys really believe that he’s here to levy troops?” The city magistrate was a middle-aged cultivator with a Nascent Soul cultivation base, who, contrary to expectations, was actually quite plump. Although he had a kind face, it was currently twisted with anxiety.

Although his cultivation base could be considered high, when it came to the five legions, that didn’t really matter. Besides, he had only achieved his breakthrough with a Nascent Soul Pill, and had reached his current position by greasing the wheels back at the sect.

He was also wondering why this major general had really come to World City. The fact that the four World City major generals all seemed similarly suspicious only served to further his reservations.

Even as everyone was discussing the matter, nine bright beams of light appeared off in the distance. As muffled rumbling filled the air, the congregated cultivators turned to look in the direction of the light, and soon, nine soldiers came into view.

All of them had expressionless faces and seethed with murderous auras. Despite being mere Core Formation cultivators, they were obviously the type of people one couldn't afford to underestimate.

"The exalted major general will be arriving soon. Thank you for coming to receive him, ladies and gentlemen!" After making their introductions, a few of the group of nine went back the way they came to report in, while the rest inspected the area.

Very serious expressions could be seen on the faces of the city magistrate, the major generals, and the other city leadership officials.

Another two hours went by before intense rumbling sounds could be heard. Everyone in the waiting crowd looked up with sober expressions as rippling fluctuations filled the sky like waves.

Moments later, the vanguard of the 3rd Corps appeared, bristling with energy, looking like a sharp blade as they sliced through the clouds!

Everyone gasped at the impressive sight.

That was especially true of the four major generals, who all smiled bitterly when they realized that the subordinates under their control were clearly not a match for the cultivators from the 3rd Corps.

Just behind the vanguard were two regiments of a thousand men each, stretched out in wings to the left and right.

The two regiments with their pulsing murderous auras almost looked like a bow, taut and ready to unleash mighty arrows. Next came Bai Xiaochun, surrounded by his personal guard, and flanked by more troops. Almost immediately, Bai Xiaochun became the focus of all attention, what with his glittering golden suit of armor.

As the army approached, the gathered cultivators got even more nervous. In contrast, Bai Xiaochun was feeling very excited, and was continuously sighing in satisfaction.

“Back when I first came to this place, not a single person knew my name. Now, every single person with a title or power has come out to receive me.” As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun was fully convinced that all the hard work he had gone through to reach his current rank was definitely worth it.

As they drew close to the city magistrate and other cultivators, Bai Xiaochun barked out an order, and the army halted in place just in front of the city officials. Then, troops were sent out to scout the area, while the other cultivators under Bai Xiaochun’s command stared coldly at the people from World City.

Of course, that made everyone, city magistrate included, even more nervous than before.

Moments later, the four major generals took deep breaths and flew up into the air, where they clasped hands and bowed.

“Fellow Daoist Bai, we’ve been waiting for you!”

Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily, waving his hand at the vanguard soldiers, who parted to make way for the four major generals. They quickly approached and introduced themselves, and also offered some introductory gifts. Considering that they were all members of the five legions, and were being very courteous, Bai Xiaochun was very happy. Smiling, he began to chat amiably with them.

A moment later, the city magistrate and other important figures exchanged glances, then sighed and flew up into the air to offer greetings.

They also surreptitiously offered some gifts, which left Bai Xiaochun feeling even more pleased than before. Then, they clustered around him and began to escort him toward World City.

“Brother Bai, you are truly a consummate chosen. I almost can’t believe you’ve reached the rank of major general at such a young age! Your future prospects are limitless!”

“That’s right. I’ve long since heard about all of your impressive exploits back in the sect, Major General Bai.”

“You truly are a great hero, Major General. By the way, what important task has brought you here? If those of us here can be of any help at all, just say the word.” Talk like this spilled out of the mouths of the officials, officers, and other important people the entire way toward the city, causing Bai Xiaochun to burst with joy. However, he didn’t utter a peep about why he was here, which was what Bai Lin had advised him to do.

So far, everything had gone according to the plan laid forth by Bai Lin, including the cold demeanor of the soldiers, and the way that Bai Xiaochun refused to talk about his reason for coming. The goal was to make the important people from the city more and more anxious, and prompt them to lavish him with more gifts.

That was exactly what happened. Upon arriving at the city itself, he found that the road ahead had been cleared and barricaded to make the path clear for him. When he looked around at the expressions of respect and anticipation on the faces of the World City cultivators as they looked at him, he sighed even more deeply.

If he wanted to, he could have anyone killed instantly with a single order. Or, if he fancied a female cultivator, a word from him, and everything would be taken care of. Men would be sent to handle the matter, and she would be delivered to his room later that night.

At least, Bai Xiaochun was confident that he could do such things given his current rank.

A few days passed, during which time the powerful organizations in the city continued to send him gifts on a daily basis, until they were piled up like a little mountain. As of now, Bai Xiaochun fully understood why so many people would fight hard to be promoted to major general.

Of course, he didn’t forget about his plan to recruit troops. Zhao

Long arranged everything. Men were sent out to look for the various members of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars who had come with Bai Xiaochun on the boat trip over from the sect. Whenever any of them were spotted, a record was made, and a report would be given to Bai Xiaochun. Then, the simple nod of his head would result in them being conscripted.

After searching through all the familiar names, though, he didn't see any mention of Gongsun Wan'er or Master God-Diviner. Of course, when it came to Chen Manyao, Bai Xiaochun was fairly certain that she must have long since returned to her home in the Wildlands.

As for Gongsun Wan'er and Master God-Diviner, it was impossible to say where they were, and even using a transmission jade slip to try to reach them didn't work.

"Gongsun Wan'er has always been very mysterious, so I might as well forget about her. But where did Master God-Diviner get off to?"

Seven days went by, during which Bai Xiaochun continued to collect gifts. It reached the point where he didn't even bother to organize them, and would just casually toss them into his bag of holding.

One evening when he was contemplating whether or not to send some people to search specifically for Master God-Diviner, the plump city magistrate came for a visit.

"Brother Bai," he said with a laugh, "today is your lucky day!"

"Huh?" Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped, as he was completely unsure of what the city magistrate was talking about.

Chapter 530: A New Move

The city magistrate still seemed to be in shock at the nature of the news he bore as he chattered, “Brother, the mere threat of your presence here has resulted in something marvelous. You see, a local official had become wrapped up in taking bribes, and was even embezzling military resources. However, he got so scared by you that he turned himself in, and ended up forfeiting all of his personal property in exchange for his life. I went over to inspect the confiscated materials personally, and was shocked to find that he was incredibly rich!

“Most spectacular of all was a ginseng root that was more than 9,000 years old! I doubt you’ve ever seen anything like it. The rootlets are as transparent as crystal, and the buds all look like spirit pearls. It’s virtually priceless, and in fact, is probably worth more than all of the man’s other assets combined.”

“More than 9,000 years old?!” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed, his eyes going wide with shock. “You’re right, I’ve never seen anything like that....”

If he used a ginseng root like that in a medicinal pill, the level of life force it could provide would defy description, and would be a huge help in his Undying Live Forever Technique.

“Don’t worry, Brother....” the city magistrate said with a knowing smile. Lowering his voice, he continued, “I already had the ginseng root secretly delivered to Zhao Long. After I leave in a moment, he’ll surely come to present it to you for your enjoyment.

“As for all of the other confiscated resources, I’ve put them all in order for you to take back to the Great Wall and handle as you see fit with the other generals.”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes narrowed slightly as he looked at the city magistrate. All of a sudden, he felt as if a new world were opening up to him, and couldn’t shake the feeling that this city magistrate

was a genius.

As of this moment, everything became clear, and Bai Xiaochun felt as if he understood life in a different way.

“So, this guy is also a bit dirty, and couldn't figure out why I was here. Worried that I had come to audit the military resources, he decided to take the initiative. Not only did he hand the ‘confiscated’ resources over to me, but he also arranged for a big gift to placate me. Flawless! On top of all that, he didn’t even directly give me the gift, that way he wouldn’t run into any trouble later because of it! So smart!” All of a sudden, he felt like he had learned a new move from this city magistrate, and was just about to say something to further the conversation when his expression flickered.

Inside of this bag of holding, his identity medallion was shining with bright light. Pulling it out and casting some divine sense into it, he heard Bai Lin’s stern voice.

“Major General Bai Xiaochun, the Wildlands is mounting a huge offensive. Return to the Great Wall post haste!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s face fell, causing the city magistrate to hesitate for a moment. He was just about to ask about what was happening, when Bai Xiaochun suddenly called out in a thunderous voice, “Zhao Long!”

Zhao Long, who had been standing guard at the door, immediately rushed in and clasped hands in salute.

“Send down orders immediately. R&R is over. In half an incense stick’s worth of time, the 3rd Corps moves out and returns to the Great Wall!”

A tremor passed through Zhao Long, who quickly voiced his assent and then left to pass down the orders.

Feeling quite nervous, the city magistrate asked, “Brother Bai, this....”

Bai Xiaochun interrupted him with a hearty laugh. “Nothing important. The Wildlands are attacking, that's all. I need to take my leave now, Brother. If destiny will have it, I hope we meet again in the future.”

Then he clasped hands and paid the city magistrate no further heed as he turned to leave.

The city magistrate was delighted to hear that Bai Xiaochun was leaving, and respectfully escorted him along his way.

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, the roughly 5,000 cultivators of the 3rd Corps were all assembled. Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, and the entire group flew up into the air above World City and prepared to make their way off to the Great Wall.

However, just when they passed over the city walls, two beams of light suddenly appeared off in the distance. Clearly, they were two cultivators engaged in a deadly chase.

Being chased was a cultivator with disheveled hair and numerous wounds all over his body. Clearly, he was running low on spiritual energy, and were it not for his dogged persistence, would have already begun to beg for mercy.

“Hey, Master God-Diviner, that soul belonged to me! How dare you steal it. Are you looking to die?!?! Nobody can save you now!” A young man was giving chase, his expression so cold that he almost seemed to be made of ice. His eyes radiated rage, and he didn’t hesitate to burn his spiritual power to chase after his quarry.

“Don’t be such a bully, Heretic! I saw that soul first! You’re the one who’s trying to steal it from me!” These two cultivators were none other than Master God-Diviner and Heretic. Even as he yelled, Master God-Diviner drew upon some more of his scant spiritual power to pull out a little flag, which he waved through the air to deliver a burst of speed. With a whooshing sound, he

shot through the air toward World City, which was when he happened to catch sight of the more than 5,000 cultivators in the air.

Immediately, his eyes shone with delight. After all, this group of cultivators was exactly what had kept him going recently. The last few years had been very rough on him. At one point, a chance series of events led to his bag of holding being broken open. All of his belongings were lost or destroyed, including his magical items, his identity medallion, and his transmission jade slip. He had almost died during that incident. However, he didn't come out empty-handed; he ended up winning a little flag that could increase his speed, which was truly a powerful magical treasure.

In a desperate attempt to stay alive, he had used some of his last remaining spiritual power to perform a divination, which had told him that a major turning point in his life would come at World City. He had immediately begun to hurry in that direction, which was also when he had come across the unexpected news that Bai Xiaochun had become a major general.

The news left him profoundly shaken, but at the same time, filled him with joy. Eyes shining, he had determined to seek asylum with Bai Xiaochun.

However, along the way, he happened to come across a Nascent Soul-level soul, and had been just on the verge of nabbing it when Heretic came along. The two of them immediately began to struggle over the soul, and although it was impossible to say who had truly laid eyes on it first, somehow, Master God-Diviner ended up with it in his hands. Overjoyed, he had taken to flight, using his little flag to keep himself one step ahead of Heretic the entire time during their chase.

Now that he saw the 5,000 cultivators over World City, he immediately cried out at the top of his lungs, "Save me, Junior Patriarch!! Heretic is trying to kill me!!"

Heretic's eyes began to shine brightly. Although he was shocked by the large group of cultivators, and was fairly certain that they were from the Great Wall, he had a strange, introverted personality, and thus, had not heard the news about Bai Xiaochun. The sight of the huge group of soldiers initially struck him with an uneasy feeling that caused him to pause for a moment, but then killing intent flickered in his eyes, and he decided that he couldn't let Master God-Diviner reach his goal. Gritting his teeth, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand. Instantly, his face flushed red as a huge, illusory hand formed right in front of him.

“Nobody can save you now!”

Intense rumbling sounds that tugged at the soul filled the air as the huge palm shot toward Master God-Diviner. This was one of Heretic's trump cards, and it came at a significant wastage of spiritual power. As such, it wasn't the type of thing he would use casually, and yet the importance of the current situation definitely warranted it.

Master God-Diviner's face fell as his heart filled with an intense sensation of deadly crisis. His face also drained of blood as he realized that even his little flag wouldn't give him enough speed to evade the illusory palm.

Moments before, Bai Xiaochun had looked over at what was happening, and immediately recognized Master God-Diviner. Then he heard Master God-Diviner's shout, and saw the gigantic, illusory hand.

Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted. Having no time to ponder the situation, he stepped forward, whereupon everything around him slowed down. Next, he shot forward to stand between Master God-Diviner and the huge palm.

There, he raised his right hand to meet the incoming hand. A huge boom echoed out, and at the same time, Bai Xiaochun's view

of the world returned to normal. The power of the attack dissipated, leaving behind nothing more than rippling fluctuations.

Everything happened so quickly that none of Bai Xiaochun's 5,000 soldiers realized what was going on. Not even Heretic or Master God-Diviner had eyes fast enough to process the situation. All Heretic saw was his enormous illusory hand suddenly collapse.

But then, as the energy faded away, he noticed a slender figure standing in front of Master God-Diviner, hand raised up into the air.

Heretic's eyes widened, and he sucked in a breath as a look of utter incredulity swept across his face. He immediately recognized Bai Xiaochun, and realized that he must have drawn upon speed that bordered on teleportation to appear in front of the illusory palm, a trump card technique that he had subsequently destroyed.

Even more shocking was that after destroying that trump card, Bai Xiaochun didn't seem the least bit hurt or even fazed!!

Heretic's heart leapt up into his throat, and even the Nascent Soul experts among the forces of the 3rd Corps were looking at Bai Xiaochun with very serious expressions. All of them were utterly flabbergasted at the incredible display of speed from moments ago.

With such astounding speed, it wouldn't be impossible for Bai Xiaochun to make a sudden, killing move against a Nascent Soul expert!

Master God-Diviner felt like he had just been plucked out of the jaws of death, and was filled with excitement at the sight of Bai Xiaochun hovering there in front of him.

“Save me, Junior Patriarch, Heretic is trying to kill me!!”

Chapter 531: It's Like Looking At Myself

Bai Xiaochun slowly looked up at Heretic and said, “What are you doing trying to kill one of my men?”

Considering how he was clad in a golden suit of armor, he looked very impressive to say the least.

Heretic's pupils constricted as he stared at Bai Xiaochun. Inwardly, his heart was being battered by waves of shock, not only because of the 5,000 cultivators behind Bai Xiaochun, but also because of his incredible display of speed, and how he had so casually dispatched Heretic's trump card.

He almost couldn't believe what he was seeing. After all, Heretic occupied 2nd place among the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, while Bai Xiaochun was only in 10th place. For him to have transformed so much in a few short years was shocking to the core.

After a few breaths of time went by, Heretic gritted his teeth and said, “He stole that soul from me!”

“Rubbish!” Master God-Diviner shot back. “You're trying to steal it from me! Junior Patriarch, I saw it first, and was even planning to give it to you as a gift, sir!” With that, he produced a soul from inside of his flag and then, suppressing the pain he felt in his heart, handed it over to Bai Xiaochun.

“You!” Heretic growled, eyes shining with cold light.

Bai Xiaochun already felt a headache coming on. Obviously, it would be impossible to determine who was stealing what from whom. Furthermore, he couldn't help but sigh at the fact that the two of them were fighting over a Nascent Soul-level soul.

“Is it really worth it for you two to be fighting over a soul like that...?” Shaking his hand, Bai Xiaochun patted his bag of holding, causing 100 Nascent Soul-level souls to fly out....

Master God-Diviner and Heretic both shivered at the sight, and

began to pant in mute shock.

“So... so many....”

“Heavens....”

Bai Xiaochun was quite pleased at their reaction. Smiling faintly, he continued to speak to them in an admonishing tone, “You’re both fellow disciples of the same sect! What’s the point in all the fighting? It’s just a soul, right? Here, you two take these hundred souls and split them between the two of you.”

Master God-Diviner shrieked and lunged forward to start grabbing souls. He was so destitute that a single such soul could drive him crazy, much less the number floating out in the open right now. After grabbing half of the souls, he eyed the remainder of the group covetously, but didn’t dare to touch them. Hurrying back over to Bai Xiaochun, he said, “I can’t believe I finally found you, Junior Patriarch,” he said with a bit of a wail. “You have no idea how bad things went for me when we were apart....”

From the look of things, he seemed determined to stick by Bai Xiaochun no matter what.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun’s 5,000 men were surrounding them.

“Alright, enough,” he said with a slight frown. “Back when you cast me aside, I never saw any expression like that on your face. Well, considering how incredibly magnanimous I am, I supposed I’ll let you become my follower.” With that, he turned to leave.

Deeply touched, Master God-Diviner immediately made to follow Bai Xiaochun. By this point, his admiration for Bai Xiaochun flowed like a mighty river. Back in Sky City, he had believed Bai Xiaochun’s rise to prominence to be something of a fluke. But here he was in the Wildlands, a major general, something that left Master God-Diviner shocked on the deepest level. In fact, he had already sworn an oath to himself to never abandon Bai Xiaochun for the rest of his life.

That was even more the case when he noticed Song Que among Bai Xiaochun's men, which immediately got him even more on guard. Back in Sky City, Master God-Diviner had been the first to start following Bai Xiaochun again, and it had led to incredible benefits. Now, he was only the second to join him, which put Song Que in his sights as a major rival.

When Heretic realized that nobody was paying much attention to him, he began to shiver, and it was made worse by the sight of all the souls floating in the air. It was all a huge blow to his self-esteem. Clenching his hands into fists, he ignored the souls and faced Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he roared.

Instantly, Bai Xiaochun's 5,000 men turned to look at him with cold glares. Heretic's body went stiff, but he clenched his teeth and continued, “I want to enlist at the Great Wall!”

When Bai Xiaochun saw how Heretic's eyes were shining with determination, he thought back to how Bai Lin had spoken with such solemnity to him all those years ago, when he had been about to leave through the side door of Great Wall City.

Back then, he had been just as devoted to the idea of shedding blood for the sect that it caused him to sigh at the thought.

“So,” he mused inwardly, “it seems this Heretic and I are similar. We both are willing to suffer personal loss in the pursuit of justice and righteousness.” Although his heart was currently softening, his gaze only continued to grow sharper.

Thinking back to how Bai Lin had looked on that day, he stuck his chin up, and clasped his hands behind his back. Armor glittering with golden light, and eyes sparkling brightly, he looked closely at Heretic.

“Do you really wish to join the Skin Flayers?” he asked, trying to sound exactly like Bai Lin had sounded back then. His voice was

somber, but also seemed to carry a weight that made it impossible to disobey. Anyone who heard that voice would instantly feel shaken inwardly.

Heretic immediately responded in a loud voice, “I--”

However, before he could finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun's eyes began to shine even more brightly.

“Think your answer through clearly before you give it,” he interrupted, his tone cool, and yet his words echoing like thunder.

Panting a bit, Heretic gritted his teeth and replied, “I really wish to enlist!”

“You’re so much like me back then. Alright, whatever. As the major general of the 3rd Corps of the Skin Flayers, I have the authority to conscript anyone I want into service. Henceforth, you are one of my soldiers!!” With that, he flicked his sleeve. “You’ll serve for five years. Each year, your salary will be twice what you get in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! As for other rewards, you can gain them via battle credit!

“Furthermore, I can promise you that if you earn enough battle credit to become a major general, then you can go conscript anyone else you like to become one of the Skin Flayers!” With that, he gave Heretic a profound look, and mused that he was almost the spitting image of himself back when he had been recruited.

“I must have looked exactly the same back then,” he thought. “So passionate. So enthusiastic. So unique. Such a consummate chosen.” Wrapped up in the enchanting memories, he cleared his throat and led the 3rd Corps off into the distance.

Along the way, the army pushed with even greater speed than they had on their way to World City. After all, Bai Lin had ordered him to get back as quickly as possible. Therefore, it only took a few days before Great Wall City became visible up ahead. Almost immediately, it was possible to see a shocking, blood-colored cloud

on the other side of the wall, which had taken the shape of the face of a young woman.

She was very beautiful, but extremely solemn-looking, as if she viewed herself as being above all other living beings. She almost seemed a part of the heavens above, and emanated the shocking pressure of a deva.

This young woman occupied first place on the Great Wall Execution List. She was Mistress Red-Dust!

Fighting Mistress Red-Dust was none other than three-eyed Chen Hetian. Their battle caused numerous booms and rumbling sounds to echo out in all directions. Meanwhile, endless masses of savage giants could be seen on the ground below, as well as soul cultivators and necromancers!

Although the spell formation shield was there to protect the Great Wall, the rumble of battle could still be faintly detected from beyond the wall. Clearly, shocking fighting was underway.

As the protective shield rippled, the cultivators of the five legions grouped into spell formations and unleashed constant counter attacks. Beams of light erupted from war chariots and magical cannons, all of which caused widespread destruction.

The huge eye was also participating in the fighting. Whenever the Wildlands forces managed to group together and lead a huge charge, they were routed before they could reach the Great Wall.

Some distance away from the wall were three enormous vortexes, from within which poured countless masses of savage giants.

However, there were no vengeful souls!

Clearly, the Wildlands still had not devised a method of neutralizing the Soul Convergence Pills, and were instead relying on a huge army of savage giants.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw what was happening, he took a deep

breath. As a major general, he could not shrink back in fear of the enemy, and therefore, he gritted his teeth and said, “3rd Corps, proceed immediately to the Great Wall!”

As Bai Xiaochun roared and led the 3rd Corps forward, Master God-Diviner and Heretic followed along in shock. Master God-Diviner’s eyes were as wide as saucers, and his knees were shaking. After seeing how dangerous this place was, he already regretted having sworn to follow Bai Xiaochun. However, he was also certain that Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t let him go even if he wanted to, and sighed bitterly.

As for Heretic, he was panting, and his eyes burned with passion, as though the prospect of being able to fight in battle already had his blood boiling.

It didn’t take long before Bai Xiaochun was taking his men through the side gate. Then they were inside Great Wall City and heading toward the wall itself.

A rare situation was playing out in this battle; the fact that the Wildlands had chosen not to use vengeful souls made the five legions’ Soul Convergence Pills relatively useless. Furthermore, exploding pill furnaces were only of limited use, and this battle was so huge that they weren’t effective on a large scale.

However, the huge enormous pill furnaces were still the foundation of Bai Xiaochun’s power in Great Wall City. Despite having grown very busy collecting souls earlier, he hadn’t stopped his work with his pill furnaces. Therefore, it was only natural that some of the sealed pill furnaces would appear in this battle.

Booms rang out, accompanied by miserable shrieks. Unfortunately, the fact that there were only a limited numbers of pill furnaces available ensured that they were quickly used up.

The Wildlands had prepared well for this offensive. Considering how many savage giants were pouring out of their three vortexes, it was obviously that many more than 100 tribes were involved.

There were definitely no less than 1,000,000 giants fighting, many of them unhesitatingly resorting to self-detonation in their attempts to break through the spell formation shield.

Chapter 532: Wronged!

Strangely, no matter how powerful the attacks of the Wildlanders seemed, Bai Lin and the other generals didn't issue any orders for their soldiers to fight back. Instead, they were ordered to stay behind the shield.

In fact, as the shield retreated, they retreated!

The only fighting that went on was with any necromancers who were able to pierce through the shield itself!

As of this moment, the battle seemed somewhat lopsided. Countless savage giants roared forth to attack the shield, which was slowly being pushed back across the battlefield.

The cultivators of the five legions were pulling back until the point that they were in the shadow of the wall itself. Anxiety was mounting among the soldiers, and yet the eyes of Bai Lin and the other four generals glittered brightly, as though they were waiting for just the right moment to order a counter attack.

“And that should do it....” Bai Lin murmured, looking both edgy and eager at the same time.

Even as the cultivators continued to fall back, the huge eye atop the pagoda in the middle of the city suddenly flared to life, revealing the image of a bat!

Instantly, cold-blooded laughter pierced into the ears of everyone present as the bat opened its mouth and then spit out a stream of vengeful souls!

1 soul. 10 souls. 1,000 souls. 10,000 souls. Soon, it was almost impossible to count how many souls were pouring madly out of the bat's mouth. The bat was like a bottomless pit; within the blink of an eye, more than 100,000,000 souls could be seen flying out of Great Wall City and through the shield toward the massive army of giants!

And things weren't over yet. The souls continued to pour out. 100,000,000. 200,000,000. 300,000,000. Within mere moments, there were fully 500,000,000!!

The cultivators of the five legions looked on, eyes wide with disbelief. The Wildlanders were even more incredulous.

Savage giants, soul cultivators, and necromancers alike reacted with complete shock.

“Th-this... this....”

“Impossible!!”

“Heavens! I can't believe there are so many vengeful souls! Aren't we the ones who fight with vengeful souls? How can the Great Wall have so many of them!?!?”

“Even if they saved up for a very, very long time, it would still be very difficult to get that many!!”

As rumbling sounds rose up into the sky, the Wildlanders looked on in disbelief. What was happening was so shocking they felt like their world had been turned upside down. After all, they were usually the ones who drove the vengeful souls into attacking the Great Wall.

And yet now, everything had been turned around. The Great Wall was sending the vengeful souls charging in attack against them!

Even more outrageous was that there were 500,000,000 of them. That was more than had been used by the Wildlands in the previous major battle. The sight of the seemingly endless group of vengeful souls rushing toward them caused the Wildlands savages to tremble in shock and terror.

In the blink of an eye, the 500,000,000 souls fell upon the savage giants, whom they bored into, provoking agonized shrieks before causing their bodies to explode.

Such explosions did not merely occur here and there. Within a few short breaths of time, tens upon tens of thousands of giants exploded, causing a mist of blood to build up on the battlefield.

As the souls charged forth, the huge army of giants began to fall apart, and the previously lopsided state of affairs changed.

Almost instantly, chaos prevailed, and no matter what the soul cultivators did to try to keep the giants under control, nothing worked. Even the necromancers' eyes were bright red as they drew deeply upon their own powers to try to take control of the souls. However, there were simply too many of them, making such efforts totally futile.

Most important was that the huge bat in the eye was continuing to spit out souls, creating a tide that crushed everything in its path like a boulder crushing a drinking glass.

The cultivators of the five legions were extremely excited, and as their blood boiled, they began to cry out at the tops of their lungs.

“Those are the souls Bai Xiaochun handed over!!”

“I get it now! Those are Major General Bai's souls!!”

“Hahaha! This is unheard-of. This is the first time the grand forces of the Great Wall have sent vengeful souls to attack the Wildlands!”

At the same time, Bai Lin and the other generals threw their heads back and laughed uproariously. This was the moment they had been waiting for!

“Skin Flayers,” Bai Lin roared, “follow me into battle!!” Howling with laughter, he charged forward across the battlefield, the Skin Flayers following along behind him.

The other four legions similarly advanced into battle, and within moments, the five legions were cutting through the enemy like sharp blades. With the savages in chaos and the vengeful souls providing cover, they emerged from behind the shield to unleash

slaughter.

As for the spell formation shield, it flickered with bright light, and then, instead of pulling back, began to push forward, completely uninhibited.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” someone screamed in a voice replete with hatred and murder. It was none other than Mistress Red-Dust, who was in the middle of fighting back and forth with Chen Hetian.

She wasn't the only one to put the pieces of the puzzle together. As the giants suffered defeat after defeat on the front lines, they heard the exclamations of the five legions, and soon realized that Devil Bai was to blame. Then, countless roars of rage and howled curses could be heard.

“The Wildlands' humiliation will never go away unless Devil Bai is killed!!”

“Devil Bai, our Holy People won't rest until you're dead!!”

“If you fall into my hands, Bai Xiaochun, I'll make you suffer for a thousand years!!”

Even as words such as these began to echo out across the battlefield, Bai Xiaochun and his five regiments stepped onto the wall itself. Immediately, Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped.

“What did I do this time?” Then he saw the countless vengeful souls smashing into the Wildlands army, and rubbed his eyes a bit before looking out again to make sure he wasn't seeing things.

The 5,000 cultivators he led looked out at the battlefield, and then glanced over at Bai Xiaochun, odd expressions on their faces. Master God-Diviner was completely shaken, and although he wasn't sure exactly what was going on, he could hear what the savage giants were screaming about. Looking over at Bai Xiaochun, he felt his scalp prickling in shock, and even trembled from the feelings of reverence that rose up within him.

“Sure enough, the junior patriarch is completely extraordinary.

Not only did he already become a major general, but he somehow got the Wildlands to hate him down to the core of their being!”

Heretic was as stunned into silence, as if he had been physically struck.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling quite anxious due to the unimaginable events which were playing out. He turned his head to look up at the bat in the huge eye, and then back out at all the eyes on the battlefield staring at him, and then his eyes glittered. All of a sudden, he was struck with the realization that this was a perfect situation to show off a bit. Sticking his chest out, he looked down his nose at the battlefield.

Clasping his hands behind his back, he coolly said, “Trifling savages. I can reduce the lot of you into ashes without even stepping foot onto the battlefield!”

In response, the savages cursed, and the five legions cheered. As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun felt more important than heaven or earth.

However, it was also in that moment that Mistress Red-Dust turned to glare at him with gritted teeth. The last major battle had been a defeat for the Wildlands because of Bai Xiaochun, and now the same thing was happening with this battle. Mistress Red-Dust’s desire to kill Bai Xiaochun surged more powerfully than ever.

However, with Chen Hetian there blocking her path, there was nothing she could do to Bai Xiaochun.

Therefore, she raised her voice and said, “Wildlanders, hear my orders! I hereby call upon my authority as Mistress Red-Dust to place Bai Xiaochun in 1st place on the Execution List, and also increase the reward on his head!

“That reward is now a full set of five elements deva beast souls!!! The bounty is good throughout all creation, and is available to both members of our Holy People and cultivators from the Great

Wall. The only requirement is to kill Bai Xiaochun! I, Red-Dust, swear an oath upon my cultivation base, and vow to never break my word in the slightest aspect. Furthermore, I will not reveal the identity of the person who kills him, nor divulge even the slightest bit of information about them. If I violate any aspect of this oath, let my cultivation base be ruined and my life destroyed in body and soul!" As Mistress Red-Dust's piercing words rang out, thunder rumbled up in the heavens, as if to bear witness to her promise. That in itself indicated that Mistress Red-Dust had just uttered a Dao oath!

When a Dao oath was uttered, it could not be violated!!

As her words echoed back and forth, the entire battlefield went quiet, and countless eyes turned to fall upon Bai Xiaochun.

Such gazes didn't just come from the Wildlands forces, but also from cultivators of the five legions!

The reward which had just been proclaimed was simply too dramatic!! A complete set of five elements deva beast souls was equivalent to a deva soul, and their value to someone who wanted to step into the Nascent Soul stage was beyond description!

Furthermore, Mistress Red-Dust had promised not to divulge any information about the person who killed Bai Xiaochun. Because of that, many hearts began to race with excitement.

When Bai Xiaochun saw so many murderous and greedy gazes falling upon him, his expression flickered, and he even started shaking. Without even thinking about it, he slapped his bag of holding, causing more layers of armor to build up around him. Suddenly, he had no desire to try to show off, and instead, had a very bad feeling.

"Hey this wasn't my fault!" he muttered, feeling very wronged. "Who would have known that bat would spit all those souls out...?" The unexpected calamity not only had him feeling very nervous, but he was also filled with regret. It felt like a cold wind

was creeping up his back as he suddenly realized that his poor little life was now being threatened.

“This is completely unfair!!”

Chapter 533: Something Big

The entire state of the battle had changed. A boundless soul tide swept out, shoving the Wildlands savages backward, causing agonized screams and intense rumbling sounds to fill heaven and earth.

Blood soaked the ground red, and the sky darkened. In the moment before death, countless gazes came to rest on Bai Xiaochun, gazes of hatred and madness that caused Bai Xiaochun's own expression to rapidly become unsightlier than ever.

He truly felt as if he had been wronged. To him, it made sense that people would hate him for his Soul Convergence Pills or his exploding pill furnaces. But what was happening now had nothing to do with him. In fact, there wasn't even any evidence that the battle credit in his identity medallion was increasing.

"No battle credit, and on top of that, I'm the scapegoat? Something seems weird!" The more terrified he got about the situation, the more it felt like he had somehow been scammed.

However, even as he stewed in his anxiety, and the Wildlands seemed to be on the verge of being completely crushed, the three distant vortexes began to shine brightly and emit thunderous rumbling sounds.

Next, an enormous, pitch-black 3,000-meter tall hand with nine fingers stretched out of the leftmost vortex. The hand quickly grabbed one of the nearby savage giants, and then threw it toward the five legions as if it were as light as a baby chicken.

The screaming giant turned into a beam of light that shot toward the five legions, where it then exploded, creating a powerful attack. A moment later, the huge hand grabbed another savage giant and threw it across the battlefield in similar fashion.

Things weren't over yet, though. Another huge, pitch-black,

nine-fingered hand emerged from the rightmost vortex. After that, an enormous head stuck out from within the centermost vortex.

The head had no eyes on its face, but had a long, black horn protruding from its forehead, as well as a blood-red mouth. Apparently, it was some sort of evil ghost!

Moments later, the ghost let out a roar that caused heaven to shake and the earth to tremble!

ROAR!!

A sound wave rolled out that crushed everything in its path, suppressing all other sounds until it was the only thing audible on the battlefield. As the sound wave passed along, it prevented the savage giants from retreating, and blasted the five legions back like a gale-force wind.

From a distance, the three vortexes almost looked like windows leading into another world, from within which an enormous giant had stuck its head and hands.

Even more noteworthy was that the roar of the ghost instantly pushed an indentation into the advancing tide of souls!

Bai Lin, the generals, and Chen Hetian were all shocked. This development alone wouldn't be enough for the Wildlands to take back the initiative in the battle, but considering that they were the ones waging this war, it was obvious that they had come prepared.

Although the unexpected appearance of the soul tide had been devastating, they obviously had other trump cards to call upon. This became apparent when, with no warning whatsoever, hundreds more of the window-like vortexes appeared in other locations on the battlefield.

More arms and heads stretched out, along with roaring sounds that caused the savage giants' eyes to gleam with madness, as though their hearts were being touched. Instead of retreating, the all began to roar at the tops of their lungs and then charge toward

the five legions, seemingly in complete disregard to their own safety.

A grim expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face. Clearly, the Wildlands had come very prepared for this battle, and that idea left him feeling profoundly uneasy. There was no time to ponder the matter now, however, so Bai Xiaochun simply extended his right hand and cried, "3rd Corps, take control of the Great Wall's magical cannons. Blast those evil ghosts to bits!"

The cultivators of the five regiments quickly fanned out to follow his orders.

As of this moment, the battlefield situation was more unstable than ever!

Booms rang out, and enraged roars filled the air along with agonized shrieks. The spell formation shield rippled as both sides fought back and forth.

Although the forces of the Great Wall were clearly outnumbered by the Wildlands, with the vengeful souls and the spell formation shield, they actually had the advantage, although they had to pay a heavy price to keep the upper hand in battle.

The Wildlands savages were going crazy, and their strategy of self-detonation was almost impossible for the Great Wall forces to deal with.

The battlefield was like a huge meat grinder, oozing blood every moment as countless combatants died.

How bitter!

Evening had already fallen. Chen Hetian and Mistress Red-Dust were still engaged in such a spectacular battle that neither of them could spare any attention for the battlefield.

As for Bai Xiaochun's corps, half of them were down on the battlefield, and half of them were on the wall itself. However, all of them were fighting passionately. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was

trembling, but as he saw the blasts of the magical cannons shooting out onto the battlefield, he knew that the time had come for him to actually take part in the fighting.

However, even as his eyes began to glow red, and he leapt off of the wall with a large group of cultivators, the land down below began to quake.

At the same time, deafening rumbling sounds filled the air, and a mighty wind kicked up. Mountains crumbled and trees were felled as sounds ripped across the lands that vastly surpassed the soundwaves the evil ghosts had unleashed.

RUMBLE!

Savage giants coughed up blood, as did the cultivators of the five legions. The sound which was battering them was completely deafening!

Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he looked off toward the horizon, where previously, a single black pillar of light had risen up into the sky. Now, there were two pillars of light!!

As the second pillar of light shot up, countless powerful ripples spread out through the air.

Both sides of the conflict were shocked to the extreme.

“Another pillar of light appeared!”

“W-what's... what's going on!?”

“What happened?!” The expressions of all the combatants flickered, and as for Bai Xiaochun, his heart began to tremble with anxiety. Before he could do anything more, though, another deafening roar split the air, causing more blood to spray out of the mouths of savages and cultivators alike as a third pillar of light shot up!!

Everyone was so flabbergasted that they couldn't hold back from shouting out in alarm!

Up in the air, Chen Hetian's face fell, and it was the same with Mistress Red-Dust. Immediately, they stopped fighting, backed away from each other, and looked over in the direction of the pillars of light.

“What happened...?”

“Two more pillars of light have appeared!!”

And yet, things weren't over yet. Even as everyone looked on in shock, yet another intense rumbling sound echoed out, and then a fourth and a fifth.

A total of eight explosive sounds rocked the lands one after another!

Everything was shaking violently, and even the sky seemed like it might be rent apart. There was no need to even mention the mountains that existed between the Great Wall and the pit where the pillars of light originated. Almost everything was crushed flat and reduced to ashes!

The drastic events playing out made it difficult for many people to even stand up. Blood oozed out of their eyes, ears, noses, and mouths, and agonized shrieks rang out constantly. Some of the savage giants and Great Wall cultivators were injured so badly, or had their cultivation bases destabilized so profoundly, that they instantly died!!

The spell formation shield shattered into pieces, and to Bai Xiaochun's shock, cracks even began to spread out in the Great Wall itself!

“This... this....” As the incredible rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth, more pillars of light appeared.

Six, seven, eight. Shockingly, a total of eight black pillars of light appeared, bringing the grand total to nine!

Nine pillars of light shot up into the heavens, creating something like a spell formation that seemed capable of pushing away the

heavens and shaking all life forms.

Chen Hetian couldn't control his panting, and Mistress Red-Dust's eyes were wide. Down below, savages and cultivators alike were stunned, standing there motionless as blood oozed out of their orifices.

Bai Xiaochun was similarly bleeding, and as he looked at the nine black pillars of light, his heart surged with a very bad premonition.

“Something big is happening!!”

Chapter 534: News About A Deva Soul!

Almost in the same moment that the nine pillars of light appeared together, Chen Hetian and Mistress Red-Dust both pulled out transmission jade slips; clearly, both of them were receiving messages from other parties.

Their faces flickered with equally unreadable expressions, and they began to pant. Finally, they looked up into each other's eyes and began to transmit a conversation.

It only took a few breaths worth of time for the two of them to reach an agreement, whereupon Chen Hetian waved his hand and called out to the forces below.

“Five legions, fall back!”

At the same time, Mistress Red-Dust's eyes glittered as she looked at the Wildlands army and spoke in a cold voice.

“Holy People, fall back!”

Considering that both of them had been issued the same orders, there was no way for the fighting to continue. The battle was over. The Wildlands savages retreated, seemingly puzzled, and at the same time, shocked because of the nine pillars of light.

The Great Wall forces reacted similarly. Numerous speculations rose up in the hearts of the cultivators as they pondered what could possibly have caused the two devas to agree to stop the fighting! Whatever it was, there was a high likelihood that it had something to do with the nine pillars of light!

As Bai Lin and the other generals oversaw the retreat back to the wall, the Wildlands army disappeared into the darkness of the evening.

As for Chen Hetian, he suddenly faded away, vanishing for several hours. When he reappeared in the huge pagoda, it was late in the night. The first thing he did was summon Bai Lin and the

other generals of the five legions to convene a meeting.

By that time, the cultivators of the five legions were all back in their various garrisons.

Bai Xiaochun was there with his 3rd Corps, looking at the nine pillars of light rising up into the sky off in the distance. Although it was night, and the beams were black, they still emanated a soft glow that made them clearly visible.

The uneasy feeling in Bai Xiaochun's heart continued to rise.

"Just what exactly is happening...?" he thought nervously. "I'm not sure about the other pillars, but the first one came because I grabbed too many souls and instigated some kind of chain reaction.

"Could it be that someone else provoked the soul of that wicked ghost I saw? Or maybe something happened inside the necropolis?" The more Bai Xiaochun considered the situation, the more he was convinced that someone else had done something. After all, both the Great Wall and the Wildlands had sent a lot of people into the necropolis to investigate it.

"What if the soul of that evil ghost escaped? What if it's after me!?!?" That thought caused him to start chewing on his lip in anxiety. Looking around fearfully, he thought back to how terrifying that evil ghost had been, and realized that he completely lacked any sense of security.

"What am I supposed to do...? Please tell me I'm wrong about this!" By now, he was scowling on the verge of tears, and couldn't stop sighing inwardly.

Chen Hetian's meeting with Bai Lin and the other generals only lasted for about two hours. Afterward, the generals flew out of the pagoda, eyes shining with excitement that they couldn't keep hidden.

By the time Bai Lin got back to the Skin Flayers' district, it was

almost dawn. The first thing he did was issue orders to the major generals. “All major generals will come to my residence immediately for a meeting!”

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, but then took a deep breath and flew out toward the huge coffin-like residence that belonged to Bai Lin. Before long, he caught sight of the other major generals of the Skin Flayers, all of whom had somber but curious looks on their faces. After exchanging salutes with clasped hands, the group flew into Bai Lin’s residence.

Inside the grand hall, Bai Xiaochun and the other eight major generals stood before Bai Lin and saluted with clasped hands.

“Something big happened!” Bai Lin said, his eyes flashing like lightning. Everyone shivered inwardly.

As of this point, Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding, as he expected Bai Lin to go on to talk about how an evil ghost had escaped from the necropolis.

Before anyone could ask any questions, Bai Lin excitedly said, “A deva soul was located!”

With the exception of Bai Xiaochun, all of the major generals seemed stunned.

“A deva soul!!”

“I can’t believe a deva soul was located!!”

“I’ve been stationed at the Great Wall for years now, and have only heard stories of deva souls! I’ve never even seen one with my own eyes!!” Although all of the other major generals were already Nascent Soul experts, the astronomical value of a deva soul was still very enticing.

Bai Xiaochun finally relaxed a bit. He knew what deva souls were like, and obviously, the powerful evil ghost he had faced in the pit was not a deva soul. As long as that evil ghost didn’t show up, Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t be too worried. Furthermore, considering how

familiar he was with the Great Wall now, he was also acutely aware of how valuable deva souls were!

For one thing, a deva soul could be traded for a full set of five elements deva beast souls. Conversely, a set of five elements deva beast souls could also be traded for a deva soul, although it would be virtually impossible to find someone who would make that trade.

After all, deva souls were incredibly rare.

Almost anyone who actually possessed a deva soul would keep that fact a well-hidden secret, and attempt to collect the other four needed deva souls. If word spread about such a thing, the ramifications would be grave. To date, only the Celestial on Heavenspan Island had ever done such a thing.

It was even rumored that the Celestial did not wish for any other person to use deva souls to reach the Nascent Soul stage. Although it was just a rumor, if the Celestial really did wish to prevent such a thing from happening, it would be a simple thing to have someone walking down that path be put to an end.

All of the ambiguous stories left people feeling very unsure about what to believe.

In any case, Bai Xiaochun didn't spend too much time worrying about it. What he cared most about was his poor little life. Upon looking around and seeing the expressions on the faces of the other major generals, he felt very proud of himself.

"It's just a deva soul, right? What's the big deal? I have two in my bag of holding." Of course, despite such thoughts, he put a similar expression of madness and anticipation on his face.

Bai Lin seemed to be very pleased at the reaction his words were getting. He had been equally shocked when Chen Hetian gave the news to the generals. However, the reason for his shock was not the value of the soul itself, but rather, some further information

that had been provided by Chen Hetian.

At first, Bai Lin was hesitant to divulge that information to the major generals. But since it was likely that the other generals would tell their major generals, and that Bai Lin would need help to come out ahead in the coming competition and win the deva soul, he decided to proceed.

“A complete set of five deva souls can help a cultivator create a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, but that’s only one of the benefits of having such souls. Another is that they can give Nascent Soul cultivators a much better chance of success when stepping into the Deva Realm!

“Even a single deva soul can increase that possibility, and if you can get a full set, the chances are astronomically better!”

Although Bai Xiaochun wasn’t very impressed, some of the other major general’s eyes were popping out of their heads. From the way they gasped, they were clearly flabbergasted by this new information.

“They can increase your chances of stepping into the Deva Realm....”

“I can’t believe deva souls are so useful!!”

Bai Lin looked over the group silently, paying close attention to their reactions. Of the nine major generals excluding Bai Xiaochun, three didn't seem to be reacting at all. Two had slight changes of expression, and four were clearly shocked.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he had a cool expression on his face. From what Bai Lin could tell, the information he had just revealed was not of much concern to Bai Xiaochun, who was still thinking about reaching the Nascent Soul stage. Obviously, his reaction would be different from the other major generals, who were all already Nascent Soul cultivators.

Of course, the truth was that Bai Xiaochun’s coolness came from

the fact that he already had two deva souls. As the old saying goes, a full man doesn't understand the feelings of a hungry man.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times when he realized Bai Lin was looking at him. Then he looked thoughtfully at the other major generals, and finally clasped hands and bowed toward Bai Lin.

“General, this seems like a great opportunity. If you can get that deva soul, you'll have a much better chance at becoming a deva!”

Bai Xiaochun's words brought the excited major generals back to their senses. Obviously, getting a deva soul right now wouldn't help them much, considering how far away from the Deva Realm they were. Even if they got one, news would definitely spread about it.

Obviously, the person closest to a cultivation base breakthrough was none other than General Bai Lin, who was standing right in front of them. When the excited major generals saw the way his eyes glittered coldly, and heard Bai Xiaochun's words, they immediately realized that Bai Xiaochun was actually reminding them of the reality of the situation.

The truth was that they were out of sorts because of the shocking news of a deva soul, otherwise they wouldn't have needed such a reminder. Considering the cold look in Bai Lin's eyes, the major generals in question immediately felt gratitude for Bai Xiaochun.

Those four major generals looked over at Bai Xiaochun with profound looks. One of them even clasped hands and bowed to Bai Lin.

“General, where exactly is this deva soul?”

Chapter 535: Roster

An enigmatic smile could be seen on Bai Lin's face, evidence of his approval of the reminder Bai Xiaochun had offered just now. After all, there were some things that weren't appropriate for Bai Lin to directly say himself. Looking at the major generals, he nodded.

"All of you have seen those black pillars of light," he said. "As I'm sure many of you have already deduced, there have been some dramatic developments regarding the necropolis in that direction.

"By this point, the necropolis has completely collapsed, revealing an entrance within an entrance, a path that leads to a shocking labyrinth.

"Outside of the entrance is a stone stele, upon which is a line of text that clearly indicates a deva soul exists inside the labyrinth!"

No one responded. As for Bai Xiaochun, his heart skipped a beat. Moments ago, he had finally been calming down, only to suddenly be as tense as a taut bowstring. Although he had guessed that the deva soul would be connected to the necropolis, he had hoped it wouldn't be the case. He couldn't help but think that this entire scenario had all begun with him collecting souls in that pit, and that made him very nervous.

"Senior Chen Hetian has issued orders. Tomorrow evening, a group of 30,000 soldiers will be heading into the labyrinth, with him leading them! Of course, the security of the Great Wall is paramount, so in terms of who will be going, Senior Chen will consider the matter carefully, and announce the roster later tonight.

"I'll be going along as well, but not to enter the labyrinth. The other generals and I will lead armies to encamp in the area and guard against any sneak attacks from the Wildlands. Even the true spirit from the pagoda will be present.

“All of you go back to your corps and make whatever preparations are necessary. Whichever Skin Flayer manages to bring back that deva soul for me will earn a handsome reward for whatever major general leads their corps!”

Bai Xiaochun heart was pounding. He didn't care about the deva soul at all; he only cared about his poor little life.

The fact that such a large group was being selected to go into the labyrinth only increased his nervousness. The mere thought of how terrifying that evil ghost was, and the fact that the Wildlands had a huge bounty on his head, caused his heart to leap up into his throat in fear that he might be sent along.

“Considering how important this whole thing is,” he thought, “and how low my cultivation base is, they probably won't send me, right?” That made him feel a bit better.

Trying to sound as serious as possible, he looked at Bai Lin and said, “General, this whole thing seems a bit strange. There's a labyrinth with a stone stele that outright says there's a deva soul inside? It seems pretty likely to me that this is just a big trap set up by the Wildlands!”

After Bai Xiaochun was finished speaking, another of the major generals spoke up. “Sir, I was thinking the same thing. Besides, even if one of us Skin Flayers manages to get our hands on the deva soul, if Senior Chen feels like taking it away, well.... And another thing, General. Can this information really be trusted?!”

Bai Lin smiled faintly. “We generals already discussed these very matters with Senior Chen. Actually, Senior Chen secretly took a trip to the labyrinth himself already, and confirmed that it is no trap. As for the other matter, the generals have already made a formal agreement with him to make sure nothing like what you've mentioned will happen....

“We agreed to let him pick which 30,000 individuals will go into the labyrinth, and he agreed that whoever gets the deva soul will

receive his personal protection and approval!

“As for whether or not the basic information can be trusted, Senior Chen revealed the truth to us in our meeting....

“The news came directly from his apprentice Zhao Tianjiao, and his daughter Chen Yueshan. They were on their way back from a mission in the Wildlands when the first pillar of light appeared. That was when he sent them into the necropolis to investigate the place!

“Unfortunately, their current situation is unknown, and in fact, we’re not even sure if they’re alive. Presumably, they are trapped somewhere in the labyrinth, and can’t make contact. Supposedly, the labyrinth is enormous, and definitely impossible for any one person to search thoroughly. That is one reason why Senior Chen is taking 30,000 people with him. In addition to the matter of the deva soul, there is another important purpose to the mission; to find Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan, and escort them out safely.” When Bai Xiaochun heard this, his heart immediately trembled.

“Elder Brother Zhao....” Bai Xiaochun recalled how horrifying the gigantic evil ghost had been, and then thought about how Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan were missing. Then he began to pant in anxiety.

Soon, the meeting with the major generals concluded, and Bai Lin dismissed them. Bai Xiaochun was very worried. On the one hand, it was possible that Zhao Tianjiao was in trouble, and on the other hand, he feared being selected to go into the labyrinth.

“With so many people going in to look for Elder Brother Zhao and Elder Sister Chen, they should be fine. So I really, really hope they don’t pick me.” After sighing all the way back to the garrison, he sat in his quarters, brooding.

“They’d better not pick me to go into that labyrinth. As soon as the Wildlanders see me they’ll definitely go crazy. Plus, considering how far away from the Great Wall that place is, there

might even be cultivators from the five legions who get greedy for the bounty!” The mere thought of the wild reward Mistress Red-Dust had put up for his head, and how numerous cultivators from the five legions had turned to look at him in that moment, caused his heart to grow cold with dread. But then he thought about how Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan were basically in trouble because of a situation he had caused, and he grew even more anxious.

Before long, the light of dawn filled the sky. However, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t in the mood to go out and do anything. Instead, he stayed inside to fret and pray about the roster.

Meanwhile, Chen Hetian sat grim-faced in the pagoda beneath the huge eye, his mood one of anxiety and regret. After all, if he hadn’t sent his apprentice and daughter into the necropolis, events wouldn’t be playing out the way they were.

His daughter and apprentice had gone through a dangerous mission in the Wildlands, and were coming back safely when he ordered them into further danger. The mere thought of it caused his heart to prickle with pain. Thankfully, his daughter’s life slip was still intact. Furthermore, he had given her a handful of precious treasures to protect herself. Therefore, he wasn’t completely overwhelmed with worry.

He had only agreed to let the two of them go out into the Wildlands after careful consideration and deliberation. He had been worried about them the entire time, and only relaxed a bit when he found that they were on their way back safely.

Never could he have imagined that things would turn out like they did.

He hadn’t revealed the entire truth of the situation to Bai Lin and the generals. Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan had been in the middle of fleeing from some Wildlands soul cultivators when they stumbled into a restrictive spell that unleashed the eight pillars of light. Only then, when the mountains were crumbling and the

earth was shaking violently, did the entrance to the labyrinth appear.

Furthermore, a gravitational force had appeared, which sucked everyone inside. Zhao Tianjiao had only been able to send one quick message out before being cut off, words filled with terror and alarm: “This labyrinth is a land of ghosts! It opens in the evening and closes in the morning....”

“The labyrinth is a land of ghosts....” Chen Hetian had murmured. After the Wildlands army retreated, he vanished for a few hours, which was when he personally went to the location of the labyrinth.

He had even tentatively entered. However, once inside, he realized that not only was the place huge, but there was also something about it that rapidly suppressed his divine sense down to a very limited state. Clearly, there was no way that he alone would be able to search for and find his daughter and apprentice.

Plus, in the short time he had been inside, he had seen things which caused fear to rise up even in him. However, the realization that his daughter and apprentice could be killed at any moment filled Chen Hetian with immense anxiety.

Thus, he had made his agreement with Bai Lin and the other generals. Considering the level of Chen Hetian’s cultivation base, he didn’t care too much about a deva soul. Therefore, for the sake of his daughter and apprentice, he recruited the help of the legions to search the labyrinth.

If he had been in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect instead of the Great Wall, he could have mustered 3,000,000 cultivators with ease. But he was dealing with the five legions of the Hall of Steel Veins, which answered to the demigod patriarch. When it came to the security of the Great Wall, 30,000 cultivators wasn’t a small number. But the wall could still be manned in their absence, and therefore, a deal had been reached.

Currently, Chen Hetian held a jade slip, within which were the records regarding all of the cultivators in the five legions. Included in the information was a detailed description of each cultivator's cultivation base, as well as what skills and techniques they were adept with.

As Chen Hetian browsed through the records, he selected one cultivator after another to join the mission.

Most of the cultivators he selected were in the Core Formation stage, skilled with the use of divine sense, and very quick.

He also selected some Nascent Soul cultivators, but was limited in the total number he could pick, and was thus being very choosy.

Before long, the list of 30,000 was almost complete, which was when Chen Hetian's divine sense locked down onto one name in particular.

"Bai Xiaochun...." he muttered. Bai Xiaochun had only joined the Skin Flayers because of a chance series of events, and had only been a member for a few years. To cultivators, that was a fairly short period of time, and yet, there were plenty of records regarding his accomplishments, many of which came from when he had been unexpectedly sucked out onto the battlefield.

For one thing, he was noted for his incredible speed.

Chapter 536: Intolerable Bullying!

Chen Hetian paused when he got to Bai Xiaochun's name. Bai Xiaochun had become very important to the Great Wall in the short time since he had joined the Skin Flayers, and Chen Hetian knew that. Furthermore, he was aware of the close friendship between him and Zhao Tianjiao.

Of course, when evening fell, it wouldn't just be Chen Hetian and 30,000 cultivators showing up outside the labyrinth. There would be a host of Wildlands savages and soul cultivators....

Deva souls were just as precious to the Wildlanders, who could use them to add extra power to their secret magics. Because of that, Chen Hetian was worried about the Wildlanders contending for the deva soul.

However, of even more concern was the fact that the more soul cultivators and savages who entered the labyrinth, the more likely they would be to encounter his apprentice and daughter.

Therefore, Chen Hetian wanted someone in the labyrinth whom the Wildlanders would be especially drawn to, upon whom they could focus their killing intent. He wanted someone who the Wildlanders would specifically want to track down....

And there was no one who met those requirements more perfectly than Bai Xiaochun.... The Wildlanders hated Bai Xiaochun with a vengeance, and the instant they saw him, would definitely try to chase him down and kill him. After all, the reward on his head was for a complete set of five elements deva beast souls, which was something no one in the Wildlands could remain ambivalent about.

For all intents and purposes, any Wildlander who went into the labyrinth without very specific orders to the contrary would most likely choose to try to hunt down and kill Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's mere presence would attract the attention of all the Wildlands forces. Not only would that make things safer for other Great Wall cultivators, but it would increase their chances of getting the deva soul.

"Bai Xiaochun...." Chen Hetian murmured, his eyes glittering. The truth was that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had long since been working on a way to crack the secret of the Soul Convergence Pill.

Such pills were far too important to the sect to be controlled by any one person. Of course, Bai Xiaochun had also been kept in the dark, to prevent any frustration or defiance on his part.

The sect had almost reached the point of determining the medicine formula, and as for the exploding pill furnaces, the sect had also begun to come up with their own methods of reproducing the effects. Because of all of that, whether it was to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect or Chen Hetian himself, Bai Xiaochun wasn't of much value anymore.

If the current situation hadn't come about, Chen Hetian would have continued to use him as before. But now, with the lives of his apprentice and daughter on the line, he was more than willing to sacrifice Bai Xiaochun if it meant getting the slightest advantage.

With such thoughts on his mind, Chen Hetian unhesitatingly added Bai Xiaochun's name to the list!

By the time the sun was high in the sky, Chen Hetian had completed the 30,000-name-long list. He was already nervous. After all, the labyrinth would be opening up later in the evening.

After sending the name list into the huge eye, he called upon his authority to notify all of the cultivators who would be marching toward the labyrinth. One by one, the identity medallions of the cultivators in the five legions began to vibrate as the news came in.

"I'm included!"

“This mission is going to be dangerous, but rewards come only with risk!”

“There’s a deva soul in that labyrinth! Heh heh. There are definitely going to be soul cultivators too, and they all have terrifying spirit enhanced weapons. If I can get one, then all of this will be worth it even if I don’t get that deva soul!”

Different reactions could be seen on the faces of the various cultivators in the five legions who received orders to join the mission. Many were very excited at the chance to join a deva on an important assignment. Some were frowning at the thought of how dangerous things would likely be. However, they were cultivators of the five legions, and therefore, they refrained from complaining.

After all, at the bottom of the order was a line of text which explained that anyone who refused to go on the mission would be treated as a deserter!

And at the Great Wall, deserters were put to death!

As everyone else received their orders, Bai Xiaochun was sitting in his quarters, trembling as he looked at his identity medallion. After looking at the message, he shrieked loudly as the blood drained from his face.

“Deserter!? Deserters are punished with death by a thousand cuts.... I don’t want to go!!”

Leaping to his feet, he stared at the identity medallion so hard that his vision began to fade. He felt like he was a lamb who had walked right into the jaws of a tiger, and the sense of profound danger he felt inundated every scrap of his flesh and blood. Terrified, he immediately transmitted a message to Bai Lin.

After a long moment passed, Bai Lin responded.

“Senior Chen has made his decision. I tried to fight him on the point, but he refused to budge. I’m sorry, Xiaochun, nothing can be

done about it.”

Bai Xiaochun’s heart immediately went very cold, and his gaze filled with rage as he stared at his identity medallion.

“I’ve performed great services for the Great Wall! I’m a major general!” Bai Xiaochun was extremely angry, and refused to believe that Chen Hetian was unaware of the lengths the Wildlanders would go to try to kill him if he went outside of the Great Wall. In fact, within that labyrinth, it wouldn’t be surprising if five legions cultivators gave in to the temptation to try to kill him.

Furthermore, there was almost nothing he could do to defend himself. If he went, it wouldn’t just be extremely dangerous, it would be almost like a death sentence!

Despite all of that, Chen Hetian had intentionally selected him to go, and had refused Bai Lin’s request to make a change. Clearly, Chen Hetian was doing all of this on purpose.

“He must intend to use me as bait to distract the Wildlanders....” Bai Xiaochun thought, his eyes glinting red with anger, and his blood pumping wildly. Certain that his analysis was correct, his rage continued to mount. To him, it felt as painful as if someone were standing behind him, poking a sabre into his back to force him to jump into a fiery pit. He almost couldn’t breathe.

“If I don’t go, I’ll be punished with death by a thousand cuts. Plus, the River-Defying Sect would be implicated. I’m not simply being put into extreme danger, I’m being sentenced to death....

“I’ve been defending the Great Wall for years now! I’ve earned countless battle credit. And this is how the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect treats me!?” Bai Xiaochun was so angry that he balled his hands into fists, his face turning red and blue veins bulging out on his neck. Then, after a long moment, he began to chuckle bitterly

There were no options. It was either a literal death penalty or a figurative death sentence, and therefore, he had no choice other

than to pick the latter.

“They must have already cracked the secrets of my Soul Convergence Pill.” There was nothing he could do about that. By this point, he was physically trembling, although it wasn’t from fear, but rather, fury!

The incident with the Fantasy Pills back in Sky City had been a clue about how the sect tended to treat him, but he had never imagined that after everything that happened later, he would reach a point like this.

After struggling to get himself under control, he chuckled bitterly and began to pack his belongings. Since he had no choice in the matter, the only thing he could do was make sure he was as prepared as possible to keep on living.

He took out the Eternal Parasol and his eight-colored fuel. Originally, he had hoped to use the eight-colored flame at some other time in the future, but now, he didn’t hesitate to use it to perform a spirit enhancement on the parasol.

After placing the parasol into the turtle-wok, eight dazzling silver designs appeared!

He did nothing to cover them up. After all his years at the Great Wall, he had seen Wildlands soul cultivators in battle who wielded magical items with multiple spirit enhancements on numerous occasions. From what he could tell, the spirit enhancement techniques in the Heavenspan River were different from those in the Wildlands.

He had long been curious about that, and had even asked Bai Lin about it, but the only answer he had been given was that it had something to do with necromancers. Bai Lin was hesitant to give any information beyond that.

Bai Xiaochun’s own enquiries had also indicated that the answer had something to do with necromancers, but had uncovered little

else, and he had been forced to simply forget about trying to get an answer.

After performing an eightfold spirit enhancement on the Eternal Parasol, he made similar preparations with his medicinal pills, armor, and magical items, performing spirit enhancements on as many as he could.

At one point, both Master God-Diviner and Zhao Long came to inform him that they had been selected for the mission. Zhao Long took the news in stride, but Master God-Diviner was terrified, and begged Bai Xiaochun to try to get him off the list.

“Junior Patriarch, save me! I just got here! This... this isn’t fair!!”

Roughly 800 members of the 3rd Corps had been selected to go on the mission, Song Que included.

All of them were completely taken aback to hear that Bai Xiaochun was also included. Master God-Diviner was especially dumbfounded, and eventually just left with a bitter smile on his face. Obviously, if Bai Xiaochun couldn’t get out of the mission, then there was no hope for anyone else to be exempted.

After sending everyone away, Bai Xiaochun sighed and headed to the pagoda in the middle of the city, where he spent all of his battle credit to purchase paper talismans, as well as spirit alcohol that could be used to restore spiritual power.

Only with sufficient spiritual power could he protect himself within the labyrinth. As for the 800 other members of the 3rd Corps, although he was responsible for their safety, considering the limited time involved, he did what he could to help them, but it wasn’t much.

Soon, it was only two hours away from evening. That was when Chen Hetian emerged from the pagoda and summoned the 30,000 cultivators who had been selected for the mission, then waved his hand and shot out beyond the wall.

Worried that the group would travel too slowly, he performed an incantation gesture, causing a mass of clouds to build up that quickly carried the 30,000 cultivators across the lands. Because of that, it only took about two hours to reach the entrance of the labyrinth.

Bai Xiaochun was there in the crowd, glaring furiously at Chen Hetian. However, considering the level of the man's cultivation base, Bai Xiaochun knew that he could only sigh helplessly about the situation. However, that didn't prevent him from swearing an oath.

“You just wait until I become a demigod, you old fossil! Then I'll get my revenge in full!”

Chapter 537: Devil Bai Is Here!

Along the way, Bai Xiaochun had considered putting his mask on. However, it wasn't very convenient to do so with so many people around, so all he could do was scowl and maintain his place within the crowd.

Currently, he was wrapped up in thoughts about how to keep himself safe. However, up to this point, he hadn't come up with any new ideas. The only thing he could think to do was try to find an opportunity inside the labyrinth to put on his mask and change his identity.

"That's my only option...." he thought sullenly, his expression grim.

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While Chen Hetian was leading his group of 30,000 cultivators toward the nine black pillars of light and the labyrinth beneath them, the Wildlands forces were doing the same.

After all, when compared to a deva soul, the war was of little consequence. The fighting had gone on for countless years, and the Great Wall had held strong over and over again.

Unfortunately for the Wildlanders, deva souls were as rare as phoenix feathers or qilin horns. Therefore, whenever one appeared, it became the most important aspect of anything. As with the Great Wall, they had their misgivings about whether or not the labyrinth was some sort of trap. However, when it came to Mistress Red-Dust, she had immediately come to certain speculations regarding the place, even when the first black pillar of light had appeared.

Later, when the single beam turned into nine, her speculations had been confirmed as being true!

"It is almost completely without question that this is one of the

ten sepulchers of the second-generation arch-emperor!" Mistress Red-Dust had been visibly moved by the sight of the nine black pillars of light, and they immediately caused her to recall a bit of history that her father had related to her.

Before the rebellion led by the Celestial from Heavenspan Island, the realm was not called the lands of Heavenspan, but rather, the lands of the arch-emperor. Furthermore, there were actually two emperors who ruled in those lands. One was the arch-emperor, and the other was the hell-emperor.

The arch-emperor presided over the Ancestor River, and the hell-emperor presided over the Underworld River! The Ancestor River was none other than the modern-day Heavenspan River!

One of the emperors presided over the living, the other presided over the dead!

One was the ultimate entity in the world, the other was the ultimate expression of the faith of its people!

Before the second-generation arch-emperor's longevity ended, he drew upon the energy of all living things in heaven and earth to construct ten sepulchers. The first sepulcher was the actual location of his remains, and would remain eternally unopened. However, the other nine sepulchers contained various funerary objects left behind after his death, as well as numerous legacies.

His entire purpose in leaving behind the sepulchers was in case one of his later descendants ended up facing a powerful enemy. In such a situation, they could rely on the sepulchers to gain the power to fight back. Of course, the sepulchers were protected by restrictive spells that made them impossible for people to search for and find.

The location of the sepulchers had been passed down from one arch-emperor to the next over several generations, and were kept top secret. However, something unexpected happened during the reign of the fifth-generation arch-emperor!

He died a sudden and unexpected death, without the opportunity to pass on all of his secrets. Because of that, the location of the second-generation arch-emperor's sepulchers became an unsolvable mystery.

It was during the reign of the ninth-generation arch-emperor that Heavenspan rose to prominence. All the lands rebelled, and the rulers of the world changed. The battered and broken survivors of the arch-emperor's bloodline fled into the Wildlands, and the sepulchers of the second-generation arch-emperor became little more than legend.

Mistress Red-Dust was deeply excited about the possibility of the labyrinth being one of the sepulchers of the second-generation arch-emperor. "Each sepulcher would be surrounded by dozens of caves, each of which would contain the remains of deva-level beasts. There would also be a stone stele with details regarding the trial by fire inside. Other than one of the sepulchers of the second-generation arch-emperor, I can't think of any other location that would directly offer a deva soul as a reward!"

She didn't tell anyone about what she knew, but at the same time, was relatively certain that few people in the world had even heard about the second-generation arch-emperor. Of course, the mere mention of a deva soul was enough to stir all of the local Wildlands soul cultivators into a frenzy, and to avoid suspicion, she did nothing to prevent them from taking action.

In fact, having so many soul cultivators along exploring the labyrinth at the same time as her would make it easier for her to cover up her true intentions, and make her way through the maze.

And that was what led to all of the soul cultivators and savages in the area rushing at top speed toward the labyrinth.

Many of them had never fought on the battlefield, and did not belong to any of the major powers of the Wildlands. They were essentially rogue cultivators, and they were showing up in droves.

Currently, the sky was growing dark as evening approached, and numerous such figures were starting to show up outside of the labyrinth's entrance. At the moment, it was too early for the labyrinth to be open, and therefore, the new arrivals either stuck together in groups of three to five people, or waited alone off to the side.

As evening grew nearer, rumbling sounds filled the air from the direction of the Great Wall as 30,000 beams of light appeared. The commotion instantly drew the attention of the Wildlands soul cultivators and savages, whose eyes began to glitter with killing intent.

The buzz of conversation soon rose up.

“The rebel cultivators!”

“Hmph! Rebel cultivators from the Great Wall! And a big group of them!”

“Yeah, so what? This is the Wildlands, and we're the Holy People!”

However, despite the Great Wall having sent a large group, they were actually outnumbered by the Wildlands soul cultivators, of whom there were at least 100,000.

Chen Hetian was in the lead of the group of 30,000, and as they neared and saw the cold stares being leveled at them, he snorted.

The sound of that snort immediately slammed like thunder into the ears of the Wildlanders, many of whom couldn't hide their shock as they realized who was in the lead of the Great Wall cultivators.

However, Chen Hetian wasn't interested in starting a fight. He could sense Mistress Red-Dust's aura locked onto him, and was also aware that, just like himself, she was interested in entering the labyrinth.

Therefore, other than his cold snort, Chen Hetian did nothing to

the surrounding Wildlanders, not even look at them. He just remained there outside the entrance, waiting for evening to fall.

Bai Xiaochun was trying to keep himself hidden within the army of 30,000, and was hoping that none of the soul cultivators would recognize him. He even edged his way through the crowd until he was concealed behind a tall, burly man. Then, by peering through the spaces between the man's arms, he took a look at the area up ahead, which was riddled with pits and craters. It actually didn't look very much at all like it had the last time he was here.

In the very middle was the largest of pits, which was covered with a shimmering gray shield of light. Apparently, the place was closed, and no one could enter it.

Just outside of that pit was a 30-meter-tall stone stele which radiated a sensation of ancient time, as if it had existed in place for countless years on end.

Lines of text could be seen on the stone stele which were too small to read with the naked eye. However, by boosting the vision with one's cultivation base, they would become quite clear.

“Beneath the labyrinth is a realm of trials by fire. Travel through the labyrinth, and pass one of the trials by fire. Whoever takes 1st place will acquire a deva soul!” After reading the text rather quickly, Bai Xiaochun didn't pay it any more attention. After all, the main thing he was concerned about was protecting his poor little life.

In fact, he even bowed his head and tried to tune out the muttered conversations of the Wildlanders. After all, the gazes of those Wildlanders who turned in his direction made him feel very uneasy.

“They can't see me,” he told himself. “They can't see me....” He even turned to the side a bit to make it harder for people to notice him.

However, there were just too many soul cultivators and savages present, and they were congregated in almost every direction possible. Furthermore, more were showing up every moment. Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun was trying to hide in the crowd, that crowd of 30,000 were completely eye-catching, and all of the soul cultivators and savages were eyeing them. Even if Bai Xiaochun had been able to hide in a better way, he couldn't make himself invisible. It was only inevitable that people would find him, and even if he used cursory methods to disguise himself, they would have been able to detect his aura.

The only way to evade detection would have been to put on his mask. However, there were too many people around, and besides, old three-eyes would definitely have spread word that he had an appearance-changing ability. Then he would have been in even more danger than before. The best thing to do was to wait for the right moment inside the labyrinth to put on his mask!

Even as he was shrinking down in an attempt to keep hidden, one of the soul cultivators off in the distance happened to catch sight of his profile.

Almost instantly, the young man's eyes went wide. Pointing in Bai Xiaochun's direction, he shouted, "Devil Bai! I just saw Devil Bai!!"

The explosive volume of his voice ensured that all of the soul cultivators in the area heard him. Jaws dropping, they all turned in the direction he was pointing.

Inwardly, Bai Xiaochun was howling in grief. Moments ago, he had felt that he was doing a very good job of hiding himself, and could never have imagined that someone would so viciously call out his name.

Numerous gazes fell upon him, as sharp as swords, and although not everyone could see his face clearly, there were plenty who could!

“Devil Bai!!”

“It’s Devil Bai! I can only see his back, but that’s definitely him.
Hahaha! I can’t believe Devil Bai is here!”

“It’s really him!!”

Chapter 538: Run, Xiaochun

Bai Xiaochun was howling inwardly, his scalp tingling in terror. Even if he were more powerful than he currently was, there were just too many Wildlanders, all of whom wanted his head for the bounty on it. Immediately, he began to tremble, and hurried in a different direction to try to hide.

However, the people who had already caught sight of him were yelling out loudly, causing more Wildlanders to turn their gazes in his direction. Some people even flew up into the air, eyes flashing like sharp arrows as they locked onto his position. The cultivators of the five legions who were in his area subconsciously began to back away from him, pushing away the 3rd Corps soldiers as they did. The burly man he had been hiding behind instantly felt pressure weighing down on him, and moved away.

“Don’t go, bro!” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed. “Let me hide behind you for a bit, and once the danger is past, I’ll definitely give you some handsome compensation!” And yet, the burly man simply hurried off without so much as a backward glance.

Bai Xiaochun was getting very anxious, and was about to look for other cultivators to hide behind when he realized that everyone was struggling to get away from him, leaving him completely exposed.

Before long, everyone in the entire area was looking at him!

“Devil Bai!!”

“The Wildlands’ humiliation will never go away unless Devil Bai is killed!!”

“I can’t believe he has the guts to show up here! Hahaha! Devil Bai is mine! Forget about the hidden treasure and the deva soul. I don’t care about that stuff. If I can kill Bai Xiaochun, I’ll get a full set of five elements deva beast souls! That’s pretty much the exact

same thing as a deva soul!!”

“How outrageous! He dares to show up here despite having a bounty of deva beast souls on his head! He’s basically taunting us!!”

Bai Xiaochun was grief-stricken and enraged at the same time, and felt his guts cramping up inside of him from the terror. The greedy, hateful gazes of the Wildlands soul cultivators and savages only seemed to intensify with every moment that passed....

Plus, all of his compatriots from the Great Wall were backing away from him, and some even gazed at him with glittering eyes, making his heart feel as cold as ice.

“I didn’t want to come here! I’m not taunting anybody....”

Almost everyone was looking at him with evil designs, and the way they seemed to think that he was a treasure worth looting caused sweat to break out on his forehead.

After all, whoever it was that killed him would get a full set of five elements deva beast souls, which could theoretically be used to trade for a deva soul.

“Most importantly, if somebody killed me, not only would they get a set of five elements deva beast souls, they would also get my two deva souls! They would be rich in an instant!”

The more he thought about it, the more Bai Xiaochun realized that he was actually more valuable than any of the treasures hidden in the labyrinth.

“How did this happen?” he thought, tears welling up in his eyes. “I’m... I’m worth more than all the secret treasures down there....” The more he thought about how unfair it was that all his service for the Great Wall had ended up at this point, the more he ground his teeth, and the more bloodshot his eyes got.

Some of the soul cultivators and savages, and even some of the scattered necromancers, had such vicious glares that it seemed like

they might charge forth at any moment to try to kill him.

Even as Bai Xiaochun was left exposed by the Great Wall cultivators, there were some of his men from the 3rd Corps who were trying to rush over to help, but were clearly too late.

After all, if some of the soul cultivators really did attack, the entire situation would get out of control immediately. Eyes flickering because of the deadly crisis, Bai Xiaochun suddenly took a step forward and shouted, “Who else... wants to die!?!?”

As his voice echoed out like thunder, the soul cultivators and savages who had been contemplating attacking him suddenly recalled how he had fought in battle years ago!

Some of them had seen the fight with their own eyes, and others had just heard about it. Either way, all were struck with fear by the thought of it, and began to hesitate.

After all, Bai Xiaochun had incredible battle prowess, and whoever tried to attack him first would not only be incapable of killing him, but would also have a hard time staying alive. Even as they hesitated, the setting sun sank behind the clouds, and evening fell.

As the lands were blanketed in golden light, the gray shield covering the entrance to the labyrinth vanished, allowing miserable shrieks and other noises to echo out from within.

It sounded like the howling of countless ghosts, piercing deep into the minds of everyone present.

Bai Xiaochun was wracked with anxiety, but didn't see any other options available. Although going into the labyrinth would place him in the middle of extreme danger, it also would give him an opportunity.

Therefore, as soon as the entrance was revealed, and while everyone else was still reeling in shock, he gritted his teeth and shot forward in a blast of speed, becoming a series of afterimages

that made a beeline toward the entrance.

He drew upon the Mountain Shaking Bash, causing a thunderclap to echo out. In the blink of an eye, he was at the entrance. Of course, unwilling to let anyone think he was scared, he bellowed, “Elder Brother Zhao, Elder Sister Chen! Bai Xiaochun is on his way to rescue you!”

Then he disappeared, grabbed up by the natural teleportation function of the entrance.

Almost immediately, the killing intent of the savages, soul cultivators, and necromancers burned high, and they shot forward to give chase.

“Don’t even think about running, Devil Bai!!”

“Kill Devil Bai and get that bounty!!”

“Chase him!!”

Chen Hetian looked on, his face completely expressionless. However, when he heard Bai Xiaochun’s words, his eye twitched slightly. Then he waved his sleeve and said, “Five legions, heed my command. Enter the labyrinth!”

The 30,000 cultivators didn’t dare to hesitate, and all flew toward the labyrinth, Chen Hetian along with them.

Within moments, the entire group that had been gathered outside the entrance was nowhere to be seen. And yet, there were still beams of light approaching from the distance to join those who had entered the labyrinth.

Meanwhile, news that Bai Xiaochun had entered the labyrinth was being spread among the soul cultivators in the areas nearby.

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In one of the Wildlands tribes some distance away, a savage chief was sitting cross-legged when he got a report about the matter. Instantly, he looked up from his meditation. “What? Devil Bai

showed up?!”

Gritting his teeth, the tribal chief burst into motion. “Devil Bai is dead, and I’m going to make sure it happens!”

Similar scenes played out in other tribes. At the same time, the rogue soul cultivators who abounded in the Wildlands also got the news through their own channels of communication, and their eyes began to shine brightly.

“Devil Bai.... Mistress Red-Dust increased the reward on his head to a whole set of five elements deva beast souls! Whoever kills him can definitely get to the Nascent Soul stage!!”

“Heh heh. At first, I wasn’t very interested in that labyrinth. After all, it would take a lot of good fortune and pure luck to get the deva soul. But now there’s another option. For all intents and purposes, there are two treasures to be had in that labyrinth!”

“Come on, let’s get going to the labyrinth!”

It wasn’t just the soul cultivators and savages who were going crazy. There were necromancers and other high-ranking Wildlanders who thirsted for a set of five elements deva beast souls. After hearing that Bai Xiaochun had made an appearance, all of them began to rush toward the labyrinth.

During the several hours which passed after the entrance opened, more and more Wildlanders poured into the area and unhesitatingly entered the labyrinth.

Their goal was not to take first place in the trial by fire that was the labyrinth itself, and thus acquire a deva soul. Most people viewed that as being a goal too difficult to reach. Their goal was to kill Bai Xiaochun!

Kill Bai Xiaochun and get a set of deva beast souls!

Furthermore, of those people who had come to the labyrinth with the intention of winning the deva soul, virtually all of them had planned to trade it for a set of deva beast souls. Therefore, to

them, it actually made more sense to try to kill Bai Xiaochun!

Because of that, Bai Xiaochun was now just as valuable as the deva soul, if not more....

Killing Bai Xiaochun was the key to everything!

Regardless of when they came to the decision, the Wildlanders were almost all interested in searching for Bai Xiaochun, and as soon as they entered the labyrinth, they began to rush out in every direction to try to find him.

Chapter 539: Ill Intentions

Another two hours went by, during which more and more people appeared near the entrance of the labyrinth. Eventually, a young man arrived who caused the other soul cultivators and savages in the area to look over in shock.

“Beat it!” he said. The coldness of his words caused everyone in the area to scatter immediately to make way.

The young man hovering in the air above the entrance to the labyrinth was exceedingly handsome, and wore expensive clothing that made him look very different from the soul cultivators and savages. There was something noble and grand about the way he carried himself.

He had a star-shaped mark on his forehead, a sigil that pulsed with strange power and caused the young man to radiate a mysterious pressure.

Strapped to his back was a pitch-black greatbow that had nine silver designs on its surface. Anyone who laid eyes on that weapon would instantly be filled with both fear and envy.

Soon hushed whispers could be heard in the area. “He’s from one of the aristocratic necromancer clans....”

Looks of respect soon appeared in the eyes of the soul cultivators, and as for the savages, they trembled as they bowed in greeting.

In the Wildlands, necromancers occupied extremely high positions, and the [aristocratic necromancer](#) clans were extremely powerful, to the point where they were even highly valued by the nobility.

The easiest way to identify whether a necromancer was a rogue cultivator or from one of the aristocratic clans was to examine his or her forehead. Only necromancers from the aristocratic clans would have ancestral sigils like this young man.

This young man was not in the Nascent Soul stage, only in the great circle of Core Formation. However, because of his status as an aristocratic necromancer, he was the type of person who commanded respect no matter where he went in the Wildlands.

His name was [Zhou Yixing](#), and as he stood there outside of the entrance of the labyrinth, he completely ignored all of the surrounding soul cultivators and savages. Originally, he hadn't planned to enter the labyrinth. Neither had he participated in the recent war with the Great Wall. Such things were beneath him. After all, although the clan he came from couldn't be considered extremely large, it was quite famous in this particular area.

He only had one reason for coming to the labyrinth: Bai Xiaochun!

“Although my Zhou Clan might get a complete set of five elements deva beast souls soon, I would never be in the running to get them.... But, if I can kill Bai Xiaochun, then I'll definitely have those souls for my own. Then, after I reach the Nascent Soul stage, I'll be able to rise in the necromancer rankings. I can finally try to conjure ten-colored flame, or perhaps even eleven-colored flame. With ten-colored flame, I will rise to the absolute peak of the master necromancer rank. And if I can make eleven-colored flame, then I'll finally be a terrestrial necromancer!!” With such thoughts on his mind, Zhou Yixing's eyes sparkled with anticipation, and he flew directly into the entrance to be teleported into the labyrinth.

By this point, there were fully 200,000 people inside the labyrinth, with only 30,000 of them being from the Great Wall. The rest of that number was comprised of soul cultivators and savages, as well as a few hundred necromancers.

Although everyone was teleported to different locations throughout the labyrinth, considering there were 200,000 of them, they made a huge splash upon their entrance.

The labyrinth was essentially a complicated, sprawling maze in

which divine sense was severely limited. As for all the people who wanted to track down Bai Xiaochun, they immediately scattered in different directions to look for him, and yet, none of them were able to find a single trace.

That only made the Wildlanders more anxious, as they worried about the prospect of someone else being the one to find him. Because of that, whenever the Wildlanders ran into cultivators from the Great Wall, they mostly ignored them, not wanting to pull time away from their search.

Not all of the Wildlanders were searching for Bai Xiaochun. But he had attracted the attention of most of them, and thus, there was much less pressure on the Great Wall cultivators.

Of course, if the Wildlanders came across a lone Great Wall cultivator, they would attack in the hopes of getting some treasure. It wasn't limited to the Great Wall forces either; Wildlanders would even attack each other if the opportunity arose.

At the same time, many strange and bizarre things began to occur in various parts of the labyrinth....

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Bai Xiaochun had long since donned his mask of flesh, and looked like a middle-aged soul cultivator. He was currently creeping along carefully in the labyrinth, terrified of being recognized. Back when he had first entered the place, he had shot through the tunnels at top speed, randomly picking directions in the hope of losing his pursuers. In that he had succeeded, but as a result, he now had no idea where he was. He tried to use some magical techniques in the hopes of figuring a way out, but quickly found out that the labyrinth contained a sealing pressure that made such magics of heaven and earth impossible to use.

“So what if I’m lost? Everyone else is going to be just as lost as me.” Rubbing his forehead a bit, he looked around at the walls of the tunnels, which all looked exactly the same to him. He almost

felt a bit dizzy.

The tunnels had low ceilings, making it impossible to fly up into the air and get one's bearings. Plus, divine sense was limited. Bai Xiaochun had even tried blasting his way through the walls, but it had little effect. Even more frustrating was that it was impossible to leave marks on the walls to keep track of which tunnels he had passed through. Worse of all was that the entire place was freezing cold.

It was a sinister coldness that differed from his frigid qi, and made the entire labyrinth seem like it was a cemetery or graveyard. On numerous occasions, Bai Xiaochun got the sensation that someone was watching him from behind.

However, whenever he looked over his shoulder, he didn't see anything behind him.

"What kind of awful place is this...?" he muttered, chewing on his bottom lip. After walking a few more steps, he suddenly stopped in place, his eyes shining with a fierceness that made him seem like a sharp, drawn blade.

It was in that moment that four figures hurried around a corner up ahead of him. Three of them were soul cultivators, and one was a savage giant who had shrunk his body down to a height of three meters.

They were obviously a team of some sort, and they all had profound cultivation bases at the great circle of Core Formation. Shockingly, one of the soul cultivators had a partially formed Nascent Soul, indicating that he had failed in his attempt to reach the Nascent Soul stage and was now considered a pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator.

Being in the pseudo-Nascent Soul stage had upsides and downsides. The upside was that such a cultivation base was higher than even the great circle of Core Formation. The downside was that if a person with that type of cultivation base wished to

complete their Nascent Soul, the difficulty level would be ten times greater than normal.

This group of four was moving in formation, with the giant taking the lead position, and the three soul cultivators following. Although the soul cultivators weren't wearing very extravagant clothing, they all had magical items swirling around them.

One had a green flying sword with six silver designs. The other had a similar sword, except that it was red!

Clearly, those two swords had both received sixfold spirit enhancements!

Even more shocking was that the pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator had a glittering pearl floating above him that had seven silver designs on it!

The group of four swung around the corner with vigilant expressions on their face, and almost immediately caught sight of Bai Xiaochun with his mask on.

Bai Xiaochun stood there, staring back at them. This was not the first group of Wildlanders he had come across. He had run into a few other groups along the way, all of whom had simply looked at him for a moment before proceeding along their way.

Bai Xiaochun and the group of four stood there for a few breaths of time, sizing each other up. Then, Bai Xiaochun backed up a bit to make room for them to pass. The Wildlanders continued forward, eying Bai Xiaochun and his multiple layers of armor. When they were roughly thirty meters away, the giant suddenly turned and started running toward him, cackling madly.

"They still don't know who I really am," Bai Xiaochun thought. "They just liked my armor, and since I'm alone, think they can rob me. I need to finish this quickly!" Eyes flashing with cold light as the savage giant closed in, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward with speed that left his opponents completely taken aback.

Before any of them could see him clearly, they heard a muffled boom, and then the screams of the savage giant, who flew backward through the air for a brief moment before exploding into bits, sending arrow-like streaks of blood toward the soul cultivators.

When things became clear, they saw Bai Xiaochun standing in the spot once occupied by the savage giant, slowly lowering his fist.

Their eyes went wide, and their hearts started to pound at the realization that they had provoked a powerful expert. However, it was too late for regrets by this point. All three of the soul cultivators had fought on the field of battle, and knew that when enemies faced each other in a fight, there was only one option.

The blood streaking toward them contained corrosive toxins, and there was nothing that the three of them could do to negate it. Therefore, the pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator sent a burst of light streaming out of his pearl, which created a glimmering shield that blocked most of the blood. Then the killing intent of the three soul cultivators began to surge.

“Die!”

In English, the words ‘aristocracy’ and ‘nobility’ can be virtually synonymous, but the two Chinese terms being used here are very different. In this case, what I’m translating as ‘aristocratic clans’ is basically referring to rich and powerful clans who have long histories in the area, but aren't necessarily connected to the government. The nobility, on the other hand, would be part of the government or ruling class.

Zhou Yixing’s given name, Yixing, literally means “one star.”

Chapter 540: Nine-Colored Flame

Two of the three soul cultivators performed incantation gestures, sending their two flying swords screaming through the air toward Bai Xiaochun at top speed.

Both swords had sixfold spirit enhancements, and thus, Bai Xiaochun was very well aware of how dangerous they were.

Simultaneously, the pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator began to chant an indecipherable enchantment that caused the pearl floating above him to fill with black mist. Then, the image of an evil ghost appeared, which lunged out toward Bai Xiaochun with outstretched hands.

Considering how they quickly blocked all of Bai Xiaochun's possible avenues of approach to them, it was obvious that this group had worked together before in the past. Just as they were preparing to move forward, though, Bai Xiaochun snorted coldly.

"You guys have spirit enhanced treasures, huh? Well so do I!" With a flourish, he pulled a black parasol from his bag of holding!

It was none other than the Eternal Parasol.

In the past, Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base had only allowed him to use a fraction of the power of the parasol. But now he was in the great circle of the Gold Core stage, and although he still couldn't unleash its full potential, he didn't have trouble using it like he had before.

Almost in the same movement with which he produced the parasol, Bai Xiaochun shoved it out in front of him and pushed his finger down onto the handle. Then, a pop could be heard as the black parasol opened up, just in time to meet the flying swords and the misty ghost.

The two flying swords slammed into the defensive barrier that was the parasol, and were sent spinning off to the side. As for the

misty ghost, it let out a shriek and made as if to retreat. However, that was when a bizarre, smiling face appeared on the surface of the black parasol. The face began to inhale, and the ghost shrieked as it was sucked in. Although all of these things take some time to describe, they took place in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint.

A moment later, the three soul cultivators were looking at Bai Xiaochun with expressions of complete and utter shock, and the pseudo-Nascent Soul expert was so shocked that his eyes were bulging out of his head. The sight of the eight silver designs on the surface of the Eternal Parasol left him panting in shock. But then, only a moment later, his eyes glinted with ferocity, and he took advantage of his two companion's astonishment to suddenly reach out and shove them.

The two soul cultivators' faces fell; never could they have imagined that their own leader would act so ruthlessly! And yet their bodies were completely beyond their own control as they tumbled toward Bai Xiaochun. Simultaneously, the pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator retreated as quickly as possible.

From what he could tell, this middle-aged cultivator not only had a powerful fleshly body, but he also had a profound cultivation base and shocking magical items. He was like a prowling wolf who was completely confident in being able to move about on his own. Not only did he not fear people ambushing him, he intentionally put himself out in the open to attract attention.

As the three soul cultivators were thrown into chaos, Bai Xiaochun closed the parasol and took a step forward, utilizing such blinding speed that he transformed into a series of afterimages that instantly appeared directly in front of his two weaker opponents. Then, he struck out twice in quick succession with his right hand, striking each of them in the chest.

Agonized shrieks rang out, and blood erupted from the mouths of the two soul cultivators as they tumbled backward like kites with

their strings cut. Unexpectedly, they also began to wither up as their life force turned into white mist that swirled out of their eyes, ears, noses, and mouths, and headed toward the Eternal Parasol.

Bai Xiaochun was used to the Eternal Parasol consuming life force, and now that it had received an eightfold spirit enhancement, it was even more powerful than before. However, the fact that it could do so from a distance was new to him. Of course, now wasn't the time to ponder the new development. Seeing that the pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator was trying to flee, he immediately began to give chase.

When the pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator heard the screams of his companions, he looked over his shoulder and saw their life force being extracted. Mind reeling, he blurted, "You're not a soul cultivator, you're a necromancer!!"

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback, but didn't let it show. Snorting coldly, he pushed forward with explosive speed that clearly put him in a place to catch up within moments. The pseudo-Nascent Soul cultivator was cursing inwardly; despite the level of his cultivation base, he could tell from Bai Xiaochun's display of battle prowess that there was no way he could fight him. Finally, he shouted, "Exalted one, wait! I'm willing to become your follower!! It's much better to explore the labyrinth with followers than to do it alone, exalted one...!"

Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered as he realized that what the man was saying actually made sense. As long as he was on his own, he would almost certainly run into more ambushes, and the more fighting he did, the more likely his divine abilities and magical techniques might expose his true identity.

With someone else to traverse the labyrinth with, he would be able to avoid many annoying situations.... Having reached this point in his train of thought, he waved his right hand and sent a powerful blast of energy out toward the pseudo-Nascent Soul

cultivator.

Blood oozed out of the corners of the man's mouth, and his eyes flickered with fury. However, he simply gritted his teeth and stopped fleeing. Then he clasped hands respectfully and bowed toward Bai Xiaochun.

"I, Chen Jue, am willing to become your follower, exalted one!"

Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything in response. After looking Chen Jue up and down a few times, he pointed toward the man's forehead, sending a stream of frigid qi into him that came to rest in his chest.

Now, all it would take would be a single thought, and the frigid qi would erupt, instantly crushing the man's heart.

Chen Jue shivered, but didn't dare to evade the frigid qi. After accepting Bai Xiaochun's restrictive spell, he sighed with relief at having managed to preserve his own life, at least temporarily.

"Let's go!" Bai Xiaochun said in a raspy voice, proceeding forward.

"Yes sir," Chen Jue said, taking a deep breath as he proceeded to scan the area for threats. He knew that his only chance at staying alive was to stick close to this necromancer, and hope that after everything was over, he would be allowed to go free.

Although no expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face, he was secretly eyeing Chen Jue and feeling very pleased with how brilliant he was. Wherever he went, people would bow and scrape and even weep at the chance to become his follower. He really had no choice but to agree to the arrangement, although he was very curious to know how the man would react upon finding out that he was now a follower of Bai Xiaochun.

It was all really very amusing. In fact, Bai Xiaochun decided that from now on, he would have to pretend to be a man of few words; that way, he would seem even more threatening.

“Besides, what this Chen Jue said actually makes a lot of sense. The more soul cultivators I have following me, the safer I’ll be....” Continuing to ponder the issue, he raced along with Chen Jue.

Every turn and tunnel of the labyrinth seemed the same, and leaving marks on the wall was virtually impossible. Bai Xiaochun's head was already spinning as he tried to keep track of where he was. Finally, he decided that he would stick to the right. When moving along, he would hug the right wall of the tunnel, and when he reached the occasional intersection, he would always pick the right-hand path.

Three days passed in a flash, during which time Bai Xiaochun and Chen Jue ran into Wildlanders and Great Wall cultivators on numerous occasions. Soon, Bai Xiaochun realized that many of the others were doing the same thing he was, and traveling in one fixed direction.

For the most part, everyone avoided each other. It seemed no one wanted to get into fights. Even when they ran into larger groups of Wildlands soul cultivators, when they saw how Chen Jue treated Bai Xiaochun, and spotted the Eternal Parasol with its eight silver designs, they immediately jumped to the conclusion that he was a necromancer, and not to be provoked.

Because of that, he encountered no dangerous situations during those three days. At one point on the fourth day, he suddenly stopped in place, his eyes flashing.

“There’s something strange up ahead,” he said to Chen Jue, speaking in a raspy voice. Surprised, Chen Jue looked at the tunnel up ahead, but didn't see anything out of the ordinary.

Bai Xiaochun couldn’t see anything specific either. However, from his battle with Luochen Clan onward, he had continuously developed his sensitivity to danger. As a result, he was never mistaken in identifying perilous situations.

He could sense that even though the area up ahead didn't seem

unusual, there was killing intent lurking there. Without any hesitation, Bai Xiaochun began to back up. As for Chen Jue, although he wasn't sure what exactly was going on, he didn't dare to defy Bai Xiaochun, and also began to edge backward.

Almost at the same time, a peal of cold laughter rang out, and in the blink of an eye, ripples spread out through the air like waves on water, and numerous figures appeared out in the open.

Shockingly, there were more than a dozen people in the tunnel now!

All of them had profound cultivation bases, and all of them were charging toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered with killing intent, and he spun, raising his Eternal Parasol. Eight silver designs erupted with blinding light, and the bizarre face appeared again. Just when it seemed that fighting was about to break out, a cold voice drifted out from the ripples in the air.

“Don't be so disrespectful!”

Almost immediately, the soul cultivators who had been charging toward Bai Xiaochun stopped in place.

At the same time, a young man stepped out from the ripples, his expression grim. He was clad in a long, expensive garment, and had a star-shaped sigil on his forehead. He was none other than Zhou Yixing!

Intense fluctuations of soul power rolled off of him, soul power that completely differed from that of the soul cultivators. There was something abstruse to it, an indecipherable pressure of incredible magnitude.

Even more shocking was that flickering within the palm of his hand was a tongue of underworldly flame.

The flame had many colors to it. In fact, closer examination would reveal nine different colors. The instant Bai Xiaochun saw

it, his eyes went wide and his mind spun. That fire was...

Nine-colored flame!!

Chapter 541: Red Hats, Green Hats, We're A Bunch Of Little Hats...

When Chen Jue saw Zhou Yixing and his nine-colored flame, his expression instantly became one of deep respect. “Nine-colored flame! A master necromancer!!”

Zhou Yixing ignored Chen Jue, as if he felt soul cultivators weren't even worth looking at. All he cared about was Bai Xiaochun, or more specifically, the Eternal Parasol in his hand. However, after examining it for a moment, he seemed a bit unconvinced about Bai Xiaochun himself.

Turning his gaze from the parasol to Bai Xiaochun, he asked, “Are you a soul cultivator, or a necromancer?”

“Nine-colored flame....” Bai Xiaochun thought, his mind reeling as he stared at the fire in Zhou Yixing's hand. Based on what he could sense, it was clear that Zhou Yixing was not a Nascent Soul cultivator, but instead, was in the great circle of Core Formation.

And yet, Bai Xiaochun could tell that if the power contained within the nine-colored flame were to be released, it would be shocking to the extreme.

Even as Zhou Yixing was sizing up Bai Xiaochun, Bai Xiaochun was doing the same. He could tell that the young man was eyeing his Eternal Parasol, which he had originally pulled out to use as nothing more than a threat. Considering this newcomer's cultivation base, his nine-colored flame, and what Chen Jue had just said, Bai Xiaochun knew exactly what kind of person he was.

“Wildlands.... Spirit enhancement.... Necromancy....” Based on the information Bai Xiaochun had learned years ago about necromancers, and the fact that he had seen so many spirit enhanced magical items in the Wildlands, he was already starting to come up with some theories about how the two were connected.

However, now was not the time for protracted contemplation. Bai Xiaochun's gaze met Zhou Yixing's, and both of them could sense the powerful fluctuations emanating from the other.

Frowning, and eyes glittering with cold light, Zhou Yixing said, "It's rare that I run into someone I can't personally assess. I'm going to ask you again. Are you a soul cultivator, or a necromancer?"

As he spoke the words, the soul cultivators with him leveled icy gazes onto Bai Xiaochun.

"A necromancer!" Bai Xiaochun replied, narrowing his eyes. However, in his opinion, words alone wouldn't be very convincing. Therefore, after taking a quick moment to analyze Zhou Yixing's soul power fluctuations, he released some of the power of his cultivation base.

Furthermore, he used the miraculous powers of the mask to adjust the fluctuations so that they seemed to be soul power instead of spiritual power. It was a powerful, domineering energy that could not come from a soul cultivator, and contained pressure that was unique to necromancers. Immediately, the surrounding soul cultivators' expressions flickered.

As for Zhou Yixing, his pupils constricted as he quickly analyzed the soul power. Then he glanced at Bai Xiaochun's Eternal Parasol, and once again, a frown appeared on his face.

"Was I mistaken just now?" he thought. "I could have sworn that my nine-colored flame bent toward him when he got close to me, as if it wanted to fly out of my hand in his direction.

"It only lasted for a moment before returning to normal, but that's definitely never happened before.... Was it that parasol? No, I don't think so.... There's something very strange about this guy.... Well, maybe I can figure out the answer after killing him." Even as Zhou Yixing hesitated, Bai Xiaochun also stood there trying to decide what to do.

Considering that it was nine-colored flame he was looking at, he was tempted to try to kill this young man and take it. After trying to assess how he measured up in strength, and then looking at the nine-colored flame, he was still hesitant, not because of the number of opponents, but because he wasn't sure how powerful nine-colored flame was.

And yet, he couldn't stop thinking about the fact that he could perform a ninefold spirit enhancement on the Eternal Parasol with that flame, making it even more powerful, and also increase his chances of getting out of the labyrinth safely.

“This guy doesn't know how fast I am, so if I suddenly make a move, he'll probably automatically use that nine-colored flame to attack me....”

As they stared at each other, both could see the coldness in each other's gazes. A moment passed, and then Zhou Yixing pointed at Bai Xiaochun with his left hand.

“Kill him!”

Even as the words left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, instantly resorting to the top speed he was capable of. A series of afterimages stretched out behind him as he sped forward so quickly it made it impossible for anyone to react.

In almost the same moment that he began to move, he was right in front of Zhou Yixing, his right hand rocketing forward in a fist strike!

Although he wanted the nine-colored flame, he didn't reveal that fact in his first move, which was a punch leveled square at Zhou Yixing's chest!

Zhou Yixing's eyes went wide; never in his wildest imagination could he have guessed that his opponent would be so fast. After being struck, Zhou Yixing flew backward and waved his right hand through the air, causing the nine-colored flame to erupt into a sea

of fire that moved to block Bai Xiaochun's attack.

The surrounding soul cultivators were shocked by what was happening, but charged Bai Xiaochun nonetheless. As for Chen Jue, he moved to defend Bai Xiaochun. In the shortest of moments, fierce fighting broke out!

To see a nine-colored sea of flame roaring toward him caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to start pounding. Although he had already decided to go all out in this battle, he could already sense how terrifying the nine-colored flame was, and was unsure if he could survive being hit with it. However, since the fight had already broken out, all he could do was grit his teeth and unleash his frigid qi.

The power of a Frigid Paragon instantly filled the area, freezing the soul cultivators solid before they could do anything.

The ground and tunnel walls alike were frozen, making the entire area a world of frigid coldness. When the frigid qi made contact with the nine-colored sea of flames, it sunk down into something like a mouth that opened up to swallow the fire.

Intense rumbling sounds were spreading out into the labyrinth in every direction!

"Be sealed!" Bai Xiaochun roared. Instantly, frigid qi began to converge onto the nine-colored flame in an attempt to seal it. However, the incredible nine-colored flame was actually causing the frigid qi to melt!

Unfortunately for the nine-colored flame, it had no foundation upon which to burn, and therefore, it quickly began to grow dim, as if it might be snuffed out at any moment. Expression flickering, Zhou Yixing quickly prepared to pull the flame back into his hand. However, how could Bai Xiaochun possibly allow that to happen? In almost the same moment that the frigid qi made contact with the nine-colored flame, he snapped his Eternal Parasol open.

The bizarre face yet again appeared, looked at Zhou Yixing, and then began to inhale. As for Zhou Yixing, it was to his terror that he felt something locking down onto his life force. The fact that his opponent had such shocking battle prowess, and also had a frigid domain, was completely mind-blowing.

In response to the appearance of the ghost face on the Eternal Parasol, he reached up and pushed down onto the star sigil on his forehead, causing starlight to erupt out in an attack on the Eternal Parasol.

The Eternal Parasol shivered, and yet, it had enough power to fight against Zhou Yixing's starlight, which in turn gave Bai Xiaochun just enough time to reach out and grab the sealed nine-colored flame.

In one fluid move, he tossed the flame, and the frigid qi seal which contained it, into his bag of holding. After all, he realized that by using his frigid qi, he risked revealing his identity. Furthermore, the starlight magical technique that Zhou Yixing had just used seemed very bizarre, and considering that Bai Xiaochun had already acquired the nine-colored flame, he didn't want to keep fighting. Without any hesitation, he began to flee in the opposite direction.

"Are you looking to die!?!?" Zhou Yixing roared, his eyes brimming with rage and his hair starting to unravel from its top knot. So far, he still hadn't deduced Bai Xiaochun's identity. However, this opponent was blocking his path, had stolen his nine-colored flame, and made it impossible for him to have time to unleash any magical techniques. As such, his rage was burning extremely hot.

Slapping his bag of holding with his right hand, he produced the black greatbow that he usually kept on his back. Speeding after Bai Xiaochun, he pulled the bowstring back and then unleashed a screaming, illusory arrow.

It was a soul arrow formed from soul power, and as soon as it left the bow, it pierced through the air to appear right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

His bow was a precious treasure that had received a ninefold spirit enhancement. The sheer power on display caused Bai Xiaochun's eyes to widen before yet again opening his Eternal Parasol to defend himself.

Intense rumbling sounds rang out as the power of the parasol was unleashed. As for Bai Xiaochun, he trembled as the parasol absorbed the power of the attack, and yet was shoved backward nonetheless. After a moment, he struggled to a stop, whereupon he looked over at the greatbow.

“Why didn't you say that you had other precious treasures!” he said, licking his lips. Instead of fleeing, he began to stride toward Zhou Yixing.

Zhou Yixing's jaw dropped; never before had he met someone as openly brazen as this. Not only had he stolen his nine-colored flame, but the mere sight of his greatbow caused him to stop fleeing and come back to rob him of it.

“Are you looking to die?!” Zhou Yixing roared a second time. Then he pulled the bowstring back and launched three soul arrows in rapid succession.

Off in the distance, Chen Jue was shaking in fear. Although Zhou Yixing hadn't yet recognized Bai Xiaochun, the instant that frigid qi appeared, Chen Jue did, and it sent his mind into a tailspin. The first thing that popped into his head was that he himself was doomed to die. Howling inwardly in grief, he tried to decide whether or not to flee.

Then, the fighting between Bai Xiaochun and Zhou Yixing started again. That was when something completely unexpected happened!

“Red hats, green hats, we’re a bunch of little hats....

“Red heads, green heads, our favorites are the white heads....” A strange chanting song that almost sounded like a nursery rhyme suddenly filled the air!

Chapter 542: Red Heads, Green Heads, Our Favorites Are The White Heads...

There was something entrancing about the sound of the chant that left Bai Xiaochun, Zhou Yixing, and Chen Jue all completely shaken. Even more spine-tingling was the fact that it wasn't a single voice chanting the nursery rhyme, but a whole group of them!

They sounded like children, laughing and giggling as they sang. As the sound of their voices moved along, invisible sound waves filled the air, causing the walls to begin to ripple.

Then, faces appeared on the walls, one after another. There were men and women, old and young, and without exception, they appeared to be terrified. Then, they started to scream....

“The red hats are coming!”

“Run! The red hats are on their way....” The faces seemed to want to flee or hide, but couldn't. Even more bizarre, faces began to rise up out of the ground.

Most shocking of all was that the walls began to move dramatically, causing the path behind Bai Xiaochun, Zhou Yixing, and Chen Jue to be sealed up tight, placing them in a dead end!

All three of the cultivators were physically trembling, and the hair on the backs of their necks began to stand on end.

All of them were struck by a feeling that came, not from their cultivation bases, but from their souls. It was the cold, prickly dread that one would face when being tracked down by a predator.

It didn't matter that Bai Xiaochun cultivated the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, the coldness he felt right now left him shivering.

“What's going on!?”

This dread left the entire group completely disinterested in fighting each other. All of a sudden, an agonized shriek rang out, and a hand shot out from the corner of the intersection just up ahead. The hand was dripping with blood, and as soon as it appeared, it tried to grab on to the wall, in clear view of Bai Xiaochun and the others.

However, there was clearly something around the corner tugging on the owner of the hand. The hand flexed, and the fingers clawed against the wall to grab at something, and yet, it was soon dragged back around the corner.

Then, horrifying crunching sounds could be heard, during which time the singing of the nursery rhyme ceased.

Trembling violently, the terrified Chen Jue inched over toward Bai Xiaochun, hoping that the proximity would bring him some measure of safety.

Bai Xiaochun's face was ashen, and he was also shaking as he stared wide-eyed at the corner behind which the hand had just disappeared. What he wanted to do was flee in the opposite direction, but unfortunately, the three of them were now right in the middle of a dead end!

Zhou Yixing seemed just as shocked. Through the several days in which he had been in the labyrinth, he had picked up a sizeable group of followers, with whom he had survived several ambushes and cut down quite a few opponents. However, he had never encountered anything as bizarre as this.

The terror he felt now caused his pupils to constrict as he stared at the corner where the hand had just disappeared.

About then, the chewing sounds ceased, and the nursery rhyme resumed.

“Red hats, green hats, we're a bunch of little hats....”

“Red heads, green heads, our favorites are the white heads....”

The joyful tone of the singing caused the scalps of all three cultivators to tingle on the verge of exploding.

It was at that point that a bright red hat suddenly flew out from around the corner.

The hat's brim dripped with blood as it swayed back and forth a bit, then suddenly stopped in place, as if it had just noticed Bai Xiaochun and the others.

"White heads...." the hat said in the voice of a child. Then it began to fly forward, causing the group of three to back up. However, that was when it became clear the hat wasn't heading toward them, but rather, to the dozen or so soul cultivators who had been locked down within layers of ice!

In the blink of an eye, the red hat landed on the head of one of the cultivators, causing the ice to instantly shatter and reveal the cultivator beneath.

The cultivator wasn't dead; the flame of his life force was still burning. Instantly, his eyes opened, and his expression twisted with fear as he let out a miserable shriek. However, what was even more hair-raisingly shocking was what happened next.

As the hat settled down onto the head of the soul cultivator, the man's body began to shake, and crunching sounds like chewing began to fill the air.

"Get off! Get off me!!" The cultivator screamed madly. He even reached up and grabbed the hat to try to take it off his head, but it did no good. After a few breaths of time passed, his struggling ceased, and he eventually just stood there motionless. Finally, the hat flew up into the air, dripping blood the entire time.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun and the others could see that the cultivator's head was now completely white!! That was because his skull was now visible!!

His skull wasn't intact though; there was a large chunk missing,

allowing everyone to see that the inside of his head was now completely hollow.

“Red heads, green heads, our favorites are the white heads....” the red hat sang, chuckling as it flew around in a circle and then landed on top of another of the ice-sealed soul cultivators. At the same time, more laughing, giggling hats flew around the corner, some of them red, some of them green.

“Red hats, green hats, we’re a bunch of little hats....” There were dozens of them, all dripping with blood as they flew along singing. Within moments, the hats were fighting amongst themselves to land on the heads of the sealed cultivators.

However, there were only a dozen or so cultivators, and many more hats than that. Before long, there were no more cultivators available, and the hats began to turn their attention to Bai Xiaochun, Zhou Yixing, and Chen Jue.

In that very instant, the faces on the walls and floor began to scream.

“We’re finished. Finished! They’re here!”

The remaining hats began to laugh happily as they shot toward the group of three. Bai Xiaochun was already wound tight. Howling, he waved his hand to send over a thousand paper talismans slapping down onto his body. At the same time, he tossed a whole stack over to Chen Jue.

“Run for your life!” he shouted. Then he burst into motion, simultaneously donning numerous layers of armor, causing slapping sounds to echo out. Glittering light from more than ten layers of armor filled the tunnel, along with the glitter of paper talismans. In the blink of an eye, he was off in the distance, blazing along at full speed with seven or eight hats chasing after him.

Chen Jue gritted his teeth and slapped the paper talismans onto himself, simultaneously unleashing the power of his cultivation

base as he prepared to go all out. Utilizing every magical technique he could think of, he began to flee, five or six hats pursuing him doggedly.

Zhou Yixing stood there in mute astonishment. He almost wanted to cry at the unfairness of it all. Only seven or eight hats had chased Bai Xiaochun, and only five or six went after Chen Jue, leaving him there with nearly a dozen hats to deal with.

“How could this be happening?!?!” he moaned, his face turning ashen. Then, just as the dozen or so hats began to fly in his direction, he gritted his teeth and sent starlight shining out of the star sigil to fill the area.

The hats suddenly flew out from the other side of the starlight, as if they hadn’t been able to find Zhou Yixing at all. Then, the starlight began to fade, and Zhou Yixing was nowhere to be seen.

The hats searched the area thoroughly, but when they couldn’t find anything, began to fly off again, singing the entire time....

Meanwhile, in another location in the labyrinth, more starlight appeared, from within which Zhou Yixing staggered out, coughing up a massive amount of blood as he did. His face was as pale as a sheet of paper, and the star sigil on his forehead was much dimmer than before.

“Dammit, I can’t believe I had to use the power of my clan’s star sigil!!” Thinking back to the bizarre hats, he couldn’t help but shiver. After looking around to confirm that none of them were in the area, he finally breathed a sigh of relief.

“He stole my nine-colored flame, and then tried to rob me of my precious bow. He has frigid qi and a powerful fleshly body. Why does he seem so much like Bai Xiaochun?!?” After reviewing everything he remembered about Bai Xiaochun, he was more convinced than ever that he had just encountered him, and yet, couldn’t be sure.

“If that really was Bai Xiaochun, it means he has some sort of item that lets him change his aura! But... dammit! Teleporting out of that situation has me completely turned around. I'm going to have to start searching for clues to find the right path again!” Sighing, he began to move through the tunnels of the labyrinth once more.

Chapter 543: [Blood-Soaked Buns](#)

In the location where Bai Xiaochun, Chen Jue, and Zhou Yixing had just tangled with the hats, there now remained only a dozen or so soul cultivators, standing there motionless.

They were nothing more than corpses, with their empty, white skulls clearly visible. It was a very bizarre sight.

The faces on the wall and floor began to breathe sighs of relief and simultaneously chatter with each other about what had just occurred.

“They’re finally gone. The red hats have gone! Hahaha!”

“The hats were acting really strange today. They didn't bully us at all!”

“Yeah, you’re totally right! Very strange indeed. Something odd is going on....” Then, in the middle of their conversation, their expressions flickered, and their eyes went wide. Looking down the tunnel, they all snapped their mouths shut. Currently, the terror glimmering in their eyes vastly exceeded that which had come from the hats, and they all began to shiver visibly.

Further down the tunnel, a figure had become visible, blurry at first, but rapidly becoming clear. It was a beautiful young woman with long hair. For some unknown reason, there was something very bizarre about her, although it was impossible to say exactly what.

“So many people have come. Even big bro is here!” The young woman chuckled, her eyes turning into twin crescent moons in the process and making her look even more pretty. At the same time, she looked profoundly bizarre, because visible within her eyes were two pupils each! Shockingly, she had one large pupil and one small pupil, the two of which overlapped! Anyone who might have been able to peer into her eyes would have been shocked to the

core.

As for Bai Xiaochun, if he had been present, he would immediately have recognized this young woman as being none other than Gongsun Wan'er!

Except, he was currently in the middle of fleeing madly for his life from eight hats. He had attempted to fight back, but his magical techniques were absolutely useless against them. He had even resorted to some of his special methods of increasing his speed, and yet the hats were always able to keep up.

"What are you chasing me for!? My... my head doesn't taste that good!" As he raced along pell-mell, he ran into the occasional soul cultivator or giant savage, which was when he finally came to realize that the hats weren't specifically after him. As the hats encountered others to eat, he was slowly able to lose them.

When he was finally free, he breathed a sigh of relief. However, the thought of what he had just gone through continued to cause his heart to pound in fear. At the same time, though, the fact that the hats had given up chasing him to go after other people left him feeling a bit down.

"Don't tell me my head really doesn't taste very good after all?" he grumbled. Finally, he cleared his mind of such thoughts and found an out-of-the-way corner where he could have some privacy. Waving his hand, he sent a mist spreading out to fill the area, as well as some frigid qi to lock the place down. Then, he licked his lips and pulled the nine-colored flame out from his bag of holding.

After carefully removing the ice seal which contained it, he looked excitedly at the fire, which despite having grown dim, was still filled with nine colors. Considering the intense heat he could sense from it, he was convinced that everything he had just gone through was worth it.

"This nine-colored flame is incredible! If it had been linked to a solid foundation, then my frigid qi would have been incapable of

sealing it.

“With this flame, I can definitely perform a ninefold spirit enhancement on the Eternal Parasol....

“Then it will be even more powerful than it already is, and will definitely make it much easier to stay safe around here.” After looking around one more time to make sure he was alone, he produced his turtle-wok and the Eternal Parasol, and prepared to begin the spirit enhancement process.

However, after only a moment passed, he hesitated. “I wonder if the energy of heaven and earth in this labyrinth will be sufficient....”

Back when he had performed some spirit enhancements in Great Wall City, he had clearly sensed that, because of the weak levels of spiritual energy, the enhancement process wasn’t very stable.

Thankfully, his miraculous turtle-wok had ensured that the spirit enhancement worked no matter what. Therefore, despite having a dim nine-colored flame, and being in the middle of the labyrinth, he decided to grit his teeth and proceed with the plan.

“I need to increase my chances of getting out of here alive. That’s worth doing a bit of testing. If it fails, then so be it.” When it came to safeguarding his poor little life, Bai Xiaochun would never be stingy. Therefore, he immediately began the spirit enhancement process.

As soon as the nine-colored flame was absorbed by the turtle-wok, the designs on its surface began to shine with dazzling light. Bai Xiaochun looked on nervously, eyes wide, until the designs were fully lit. Then, he excitedly tossed the Eternal Parasol inside.

The turtle-wok immediately began to tremble, and the designs on its surface shone even more brightly, almost as if they knew what was happening. Then, the designs shot toward the Eternal Parasol, transforming into the ninth spirit design on its surface! A tremor

ran through the Eternal Parasol, and Bai Xiaochun was almost sure he could hear something like an excited cheer. Then, the turtle-wok went calm, and everything went back to normal.

“It worked? Just like that? I didn’t feel any energy of heaven and earth at all!” Surprised, he picked up the Eternal Parasol and examined it, confirming that the spirit enhancement truly had worked.

Then he looked at the turtle-wok again, and finally back at the Eternal Parasol. Every time he'd performed spirit enhancements in the past, it had always incited the energy of heaven and earth in the area, but this time, nothing of the sort had occurred.

After thinking everything over, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes suddenly glittered.

“The flame was different!

“For all of my other spirit enhancements, I always used multi-colored flame fuel to make my own fire. But this time, I had the fire to start out with. Plus, it was Wildlands fire....” Soon, Bai Xiaochun found himself thinking about soul cultivators and necromancers, and how they often had magical items with numerous spirit enhancements. As of this moment, he felt like he had another piece of the puzzle.

“Maybe the way they do spirit enhancement in the Wildlands doesn’t require the energy of heaven and earth. Considering how barren of spiritual energy this place is, that seems like the only plausible explanation.” After a bit of thought, Bai Xiaochun decided that a deadly labyrinth was not the place to sit around trying to analyze the situation. Shelving thoughts about spirit enhancement for the moment, he retracted the mist and the frigid qi, and then began to cautiously search for an exit.

Another two days passed, and Bai Xiaochun’s careful explorations did not lead to any more bizarre situations like the hats. However, he noticed that he seemed to be encountering

fewer and fewer people, whether they were Great Wall cultivators or Wildlands soul cultivators and savages.

“Before, I was running into at least ten per day. But now, it’s more like four or five, or even fewer....” Looking around at the tunnel walls, he couldn’t help but feel like the labyrinth was a huge mouth intent on consuming everyone.

The thought made him shiver.

“I can’t let that happen to me! I have to find the exit!

“But everything looks the same. How do I get out...?” None of the ideas he came up with, such as leaving marks on the wall, were of any use whatsoever.

Finally, he just resorted to his old, somewhat mindless method of sticking to the right. As he proceeded along, another three days passed. Soon, he was feeling so lost he was dizzy, and was also scowling on the verge of tears. That was when he turned a corner, and saw something that caused his eyes to go wide.

A creepy sensation filled him, becoming an icy coldness that left him gasping.

There were no hats. Instead, he found himself looking at something like a large, open square, with tunnels leading into it from all four directions. Right in the middle of the square were two enormous candles with green flames that cast odd, flickering light out. As a result of the shadows cast by the flames, the square seemed completely terrifying.

Sitting between the two candles was an enormous platter, atop which was a mountain-like pile of steamed buns!

However, these buns appeared to be soaked in blood, so much so that they were dripping with it! It was a horrific sight that caused Bai Xiaochun’s scalp to tingle so hard it felt like it might explode.

Gathered in the square were several hundred Great Wall cultivators and Wildlands soul cultivators and savages. There were

even a few necromancers too. All of them were standing there motionless, expressions those of madness as they stared at the blood-soaked buns. Although none of them were talking, it was possible to hear them panting as they stood there.

A fragrant, sweet aroma wafted up from the blood-soaked buns that, when it entered Bai Xiaochun's nose, made him so nauseated he wanted to vomit up his internal organs!

Note: Blood-soaked buns, or “blood mantou”, have an important meaning in Chinese culture. The stories involving them are kind of complicated, but basically, the blood-soaked bun was something that some people believed could cure any type of illness, or perhaps have other mystical properties. The original story behind the blood mantou, and how it is currently viewed/interpreted, is not really relevant to what is happening in this scene, and is actually a profound social commentary. If you’re interested, you can do a bit of googling to find more information.

Chapter 544: Sacrifice Of Flesh And Blood!

Bai Xiaochun's face went completely ashen, and not because his cultivation base had been affected, but because of the fear he felt; within the group of hundred gathered in the square, there were a few with Nascent Soul cultivation bases. That left Bai Xiaochun feeling thoroughly petrified.

He started backing up, and yet, had only taken a step when he realized that there were people in the square that he recognized.

“Zhao Long.... Master God-Diviner....” The two of them were behaving just like everyone else in the square, staring at the platter of blood-soaked buns, their expressions those of savage madness.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was starting to struggle over what to do.

“Zhao Long has been a loyal and devoted follower of mine for years now. Back when I got stuck on the battlefield, he led the charge to try to reach me....” Slowly but surely, Bai Xiaochun's eyes were starting to turn bloodshot.

“I'm the one who forced Master God-Diviner to become my Dao protector, and I'm also the one who conscripted him into the army. The tribulation the two of them are facing today all has to do with me....” Bai Xiaochun was so torn he could hardly breathe straight. His eyes were completely bloodshot, and yet, at the same time, he was scared! The terror he felt at the thought of dying was almost completely overwhelming.

Clearly, the square that stretched out in front of him was a location of extreme danger. If he turned and left now, he would most likely be able to get away safely. But if he stepped into the square, who knew whether or not he would get swept up into the calamity?

As he stood there wallowing in indecision, it was almost as if

there were two people on either side of him, one telling him to go save his friends, the other screaming at him to flee immediately.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but think back to the situation with the Luochen Clan all those years ago. Although his current predicament wasn't exactly the same, it was certainly similar....

As he stood there vacillating, the flames on top of the huge candles suddenly danced wildly, which caused the several hundred cultivators in the square to suddenly howl madly as they rushed toward the platter of blood-soaked buns. To their eyes, what lay on the platter in front of them was not a pile of blood-soaked buns, but rather, the ability to live forever, or to increase their cultivation bases, or other types of amazing good fortune.

In the briefest of moments, all of them went crazy, even going so far as to start fighting each other to be the first to grab a blood-soaked bun. Those who did manage to get ahold of one of them would excitedly take a huge bite and then start cackling madly.

Any who didn't get one of the blood-soaked buns would fly into a rage and look for someone to steal a bun from. The scene playing out in front of Bai Xiaochun right now left him trembling with fear and terror!

Furthermore, because he was watching from an outsider's perspective, he quickly realized that none of them were actually eating blood-soaked buns! What Bai Xiaochun had assumed to be corporeal buns were actually not real. The people in the square were actually fighting over nothing!

Furthermore, those who believed they were eating a bun were actually voraciously devouring their own hands!!

Some of them had already ripped their own fingers off, causing blood to spray about everywhere. And yet, they weren't satisfied! It was with complete insanity that they went on to bite their palms, crunching them all the way down to the wrist!

And some of them were even chewing their way down to their own elbows, expressions of delight on their faces the entire time....

Those in the square who weren't able to snatch one of the "blood-soaked buns" were madly trying to rip the hands and arms off of those who had. Bitter fighting was already playing out everywhere.

Some people were cut down by magical attacks, and as their flesh and blood exploded out, others in the area would pile onto them and start to feast....

As all of these things began to happen, the flames of the two enormous candles danced, and female voices could be heard, singing....

"Eat up, eat up.... Delicious, isn't it...?"

Bai Xiaochun felt like his mind was being struck by countless lightning bolts, and he was shaking visibly at the horror in front of him!!

That was when he saw Master God-Diviner finally get one of the "blood-soaked buns" and then begin to laugh uproariously as he lifted his hands up toward his mouth. Off to the side, Zhao Long, who hadn't managed to get his hands on the prize, was now starting to fight over one of the corpses of the other cultivators....

In that moment, Bai Xiaochun's hesitation vanished. Eyes bloodshot, he made his decision. Throwing caution to the wind, he took a step forward.

The instant his foot touched down in front of him, everything around him seemed to slow down. At the same time, his frigid qi rushed out in all directions to fill the square. In the next instant, Bai Xiaochun moved with such incredible speed that, combined with his frigid domain teleportation, he appeared right in front of Master God-Diviner. Without hesitating at all, he reached out and grabbed Master God-Diviner's hand in the instant before it reached his mouth. Jerking the hand back, he shouted, "Master God-

Diviner, wake up!!”

A snapping sound rang out as Master God-Diviner’s teeth clicked down on nothing but air. Then he looked up at Bai Xiaochun and howled; clearly, anyone who interfered with him in any way was little more than an enemy.

Master God-Diviner’s hand blurred in an incantation gesture and then shoved out at Bai Xiaochun. At the same time, he lunged forward like a rabid dog as he tried to bite down onto the hand Bai Xiaochun had grabbed.

Bai Xiaochun looked over anxiously at Zhao Long, who was now laughing madly as he dragged one of the corpses off to the side. Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun’s vision was starting to cloud over. In fact, the blood-soaked buns on the platter up ahead were now starting to transform into Live-Forever Never-Die Pills!

The mere sight of such pills caused Bai Xiaochun’s mind to reel. However, he bit down onto his tongue to clear his mind. Already, the frigid qi in the area was beginning to fade away, meaning that time was very limited.

“Dammit!” he yelled. With that, he reached out with his left hand and grabbed Master God-Diviner by the throat. Holding him fast no matter how he struggled, he rushed over to Zhao Long, who was just in the middle of taking a bite of bloody flesh, and grabbed him up. Then he rushed back toward the tunnel mouth.

Suddenly, two soul-chilling screams erupted from the candle flames as two women became visible. They looked exactly the same, middle-aged with disheveled hair, and they were both looking straight at Bai Xiaochun.

“How dare you meddle in our affairs! You’ve disturbed our sacrifice of flesh and blood, and therefore, you will not leave this place alive!!”

In response to the voices, Bai Xiaochun shuddered. Then he

looked around, and saw everything in the area slowly becoming piles of Live-Forever Never-Die Pills.

“Live forever.... Live forever....” Even as he felt himself descending into madness, all of a sudden, a tiny strand of Willpower rose up in his Gold Core.

The Willpower poured into his mind like boiling water poured onto snow. Instantly, the illusions he had been seeing vanished, and he looked around ashen-faced to find that more than eighty percent of his frigid qi had been melted by the candles.

Once it was completely melted, he would be incapable of teleporting away, and would have to rely only on his fleshly body speed to escape, which wouldn't be sufficient....

By this point, many of the cultivators in the area had caught sight of Bai Xiaochun, and to them, he was good fortune to be had! They quickly began to turn and head in his direction.

Roaring, Bai Xiaochun called upon all the power he could muster to teleport through his frigid qi. Even as it collapsed, he appeared right at the edge of the square, and then bolted into the nearest tunnel entrance.

Looking over his shoulder, he saw the two women floating in the candle flames, screaming at him.

“Think you can escape just like that?” they screamed, suddenly flying into the air toward him.

Even as he fled at top speed, the air rippled in a different tunnel, and Gongsun Wan'er appeared. Striding forward, she shoved her right hand out viciously in the direction of the two women.

“Screw off! How dare you try to mess with one of my people!”

The two women screamed miserably. Although the wave of Gongsun Wan'er's arm had not contained even a bit of magical power, the two women flickered as if they might vanish. At the same time, expressions of unprecedented shock and terror

appeared on their faces.

Not daring to move forward even an inch, they dropped down and kowtowed.

“Get back to your sacrifice of flesh and blood,” Gongsun Wan’er said coolly. “And from now on, mind your own business.” As she spoke, the tiny second pupil in each of her eyes began to shine with a mysterious light.

It was that very light that caused the two women to tremble in terror, and creep backward toward their candles.

Chapter 545: I'm Zhou Yixing, You Moron!

Bai Xiaochun raced down the tunnel, unaware of what was happening behind him in the square. Eventually, when he was far enough away that he couldn't detect even a bit of the sweet aroma, he finally slowed down and then checked his surroundings.

Convinced he was far enough away from the square, he put Zhao Long and Master God-Diviner down, both of whom were unconscious. Master God-Diviner seemed in better shape than Zhao Long, who was currently biting down on a chunk of bloody flesh.

Bai Xiaochun removed the chunk of flesh and put a medicinal pill in Zhao Long's mouth, and then did the same for Master God-Diviner. Then he bopped them both on the top of the head.

The two of them shivered, and then slowly opened their eyes. They looked up in confusion at Bai Xiaochun with his mask on, and then looked around to try to determine their location. Finally, they recalled what had occurred in the square, and both of them began to retch. Zhao Long even curled up into the fetal position.

Upon recovery, Master God-Diviner looked at Bai Xiaochun with an expression of gratitude. Clasp hands, he bowed and said, "Many thanks for your kindness in rescuing us, Fellow Daoist!!"

He was well aware that, considering how terrifying the situation had been, without someone there to rescue him, he might have ended up eating himself to death.

The residual fear still had him trembling.

After Zhao Long managed to stop vomiting, he looked at Bai Xiaochun with clasped hands and then bowed deeply. Although Bai Xiaochun looked like a soul cultivator, he was still profoundly thankful.

"This place is very dangerous," Bai Xiaochun said. "You two take

care of yourselves.” By now, he felt physically and emotionally exhausted. From the moment he had entered this labyrinth, he had been fighting with cultivators or running from terrifying entities, and it was getting very hard to handle. Whether it was the red hats or the blood-soaked buns, they all left Bai Xiaochun feeling very threatened. Sighing, he gave Master God-Diviner and Zhao Long some medicinal pills and paper talismans, then left.

He chose not to take them with him; if his identity were revealed, it would place them all in great danger. Besides, he had the feeling that going around in this place on his own was much safer.

After he left, Master God-Diviner and Zhao Long exchanged a silent glance, then looked down thoughtfully at the medicinal pills and paper talismans they had been given. Then they talked for a bit, which led them to the decision of joining forces.

A few more days went by. Bai Xiaochun made his way through the labyrinth as cautiously as ever. Unfortunately, after leaving the square with the blood-soaked buns, he was just as lost as ever.

Gritting his teeth, he used the same method as before to try to figure out where exactly he was. However, the more time that passed, the more his fear mounted. Before long, he reached a point where he hadn't seen anyone else for a full two days.

The entire labyrinth seemed filled with nothing other than corpses, and his heart was wound as tight as a taut bowstring.

“Something weird is going on. Don't tell me that more than 100,000 people are all dead?” The thought left him feeling completely stifled. He had no idea where he was heading, and couldn't find the exit. He couldn't leave marks on the walls to keep track of where he'd been, and actually had the feeling he was going in circles. On top of it all, he now felt like he was alone. He was so jumpy about everything that he wasn't even thinking about his mask and disguise.

Another day passed. He had decided to pick up speed, and yet,

still hadn't encountered anyone else. His terror grew.

Then he thought of the person who had landed him in his mess, and gnashed his teeth. "Damn that Chen Hetian! I served the Great Wall well, and this is how you repay me!?!?"

It was in that moment of rage when Bai Xiaochun suddenly heard the sound of whistling air. Apparently, someone was heading in his direction at top speed. Considering it had been days since he'd seen anyone else, he was actually delighted.

However, at the same time, he maintained full vigilance, backing up and keeping his eye on the intersection up ahead.

At the same time, the whistling sound stopped, as if whoever it was on the other side of the corner had also detected the presence of another.

Bai Xiaochun had no idea who was around that corner; it could be a person or a ghost for all he knew. Whoever it was, they seemed equally befuddled about Bai Xiaochun. For a very long moment, nothing happened as the two of them stood there silently, the tension mounting.

Finally, Bai Xiaochun took in a quiet breath and pulled a flying sword out. With the wave of a sleeve, he drew upon his control power to send it flying toward the intersection. Meanwhile, a black shaft of light flew out from the other side of the corner.

Within that black shaft of light was a soul arrow which slammed into Bai Xiaochun's flying sword, shattering it to pieces. A moment later, the soul arrow was right in front of Bai Xiaochun, forcing him to summon a huge cauldron to block its path.

Even as the resulting boom shook the area, Bai Xiaochun suddenly laughed.

As soon as he saw that soul arrow, he recognized the type of arrow it was, and thought of the bow which shot it, and of Zhou Yixing! He actually didn't know Zhou Yixing's name, but he did

remember the star sigil on his forehead. Because the character ‘star 星’ rhymed perfectly with the character ‘gorilla 猩,’ he decided to make up his own name.

“So, it's you! Mr. Gorilla!!”

Now that he was sure that he was dealing with a person, and not some freakish entity, his spirits were lifted immediately. Rushing forward, he burst into the intersection in almost the same moment that Zhou Yixing emerged.

When Zhou Yixing saw Bai Xiaochun, his expression flickered. He had been jumpy with fear lately himself. Although the bizarre entities in the labyrinth weren't completely impossible to escape from, without his star sigil, Zhou Yixing would likely have been killed long ago.

At the moment, he seemed to be in bad condition. His hair was disheveled, and his bag of holding was running low on magical items. Worse, his star sigil was fading away from being used so many times. Once it ran out, the only way to get a new one would be to return to his clan and kowtow in front of the ancestral shrine for 49 years.

As far as he was concerned, the main reason he was on the verge of losing his star sigil was Bai Xiaochun. Before encountering him, everything in the labyrinth had gone well, but afterward, he had been plagued with bad luck.

Never could he have imagined that after days without seeing anyone, the first person he would encounter would be Bai Xiaochun!

“You’re the gorilla, Bai Xiaochun!” he shouted. “Everyone in your family is a gorilla!”

Actually, he wasn't completely sure who this person was, but was convinced that he had to be Bai Xiaochun. Even as Bai Xiaochun neared, Zhou Yixing lifted his greatbow and unleashed a rapid

succession of nine soul arrows.

In response, Bai Xiaochun laughed and opened his Eternal Parasol, easily blocking all of the soul arrows before closing in on Zhou Yixing.

Zhou Yixing immediately noticed the nine designs on the Eternal Parasol, and recalled that before, it only had eight. His eyes turned red, and he let out a bellow of rage.

It didn't take much speculation on his part to reach the conclusion that his own nine-colored flame had been used to perform another spirit enhancement. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had succeeded with the spirit enhancement on the first time seemed like a complete stroke of luck, and further incensed Zhou Yixing.

"No need to get angry, Mr. Gorilla. Just tell me what your name is!" Closing the Eternal Parasol, he performing an incantation gesture and waved his hand, sending frigid qi blasting out to form a hail of ice spikes which sped toward Zhou Yixing.

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun was very happy to have encountered Zhou Yixing, and was not inclined to kill him, not after spending so many days alone. He had even begun to regret leaving Master God-Diviner and Zhao Long behind, so any familiar face at all was like a blessing.

"I'm Zhou Yixing 周一星, you moron!" he roared, leaping back to avoid the ice spikes, and simultaneously performing a double-handed incantation gesture that caused numerous vengeful soul to burst out from inside of him. The souls quickly merged together into a magical symbol, which then erupted with soul fire as it moved forward to meet the ice spikes.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the ice spikes shattered, releasing a shockwave that Zhou Yixing took advantage of to retreat. At the same time, he shot out a succession of eighteen soul arrows!

“Time to die!!” he screamed.

Without his Eternal Parasol, Bai Xiaochun would have had a hard time dealing with Zhou Yixing’s bow, which also had received a ninefold spirit enhancement. But things were different now.

“Zhou Yixing 周一猩? You mean the xing for gorilla? So you really are a gorilla! Hahaha!” Bai Xiaochun snapped open the Eternal Parasol and yet again blocked the soul arrows, then unleashed his frigid qi to send out a volley of ice spikes.

His plan was to capture Zhou Yixing alive, and then hopefully extract some necromancer secrets from him. Even better, if he ran into some powerful enemy, he could toss him out as bait or cannon fodder....

Chapter 546: An Arrow With A Golden Design!

Booms echoed back and forth in the tunnel as the true power of the Eternal Parasol was put on full display. Not a single one of the eighteen soul arrows harmed it in the least, and although Bai Xiaochun couldn't see the bizarre face on the top of the parasol, Zhou Yixing could.

To Zhou Yixing, the smiling face looked hair-raisingly terrifying, and even reminded him of the red hats from before.

“What the hell kind of parasol is that!?” he thought, his scalp tingling. As for the frigid qi in the area, it was so cold that he felt himself shivering inside.

It was a moment of deadly crisis in which Zhou Yixing's eyes shone with madness as he flew backward. This time, instead of summoning soul arrows, he pulled a new type of arrow out of his bag of holding!

It was bright red and emanated intense heat, which caused the frigid qi in the area to tremble on the verge of collapse. When Bai Xiaochun saw it, his expression flickered.

“What... what is that...? Why does it feel so much like nine-colored flame?!? No, wait. Could that be a ten-colored flame...? Aiiieee....” Bai Xiaochun was completely stunned that Zhou Yixing would have a precious object like this on him.

What made Bai Xiaochun even more nervous was that at one glance it looked like an arrow, but a moment later, it actually looked like it was made from fire!!

It was almost as if it existed in a state between corporeal and illusory! Even more extraordinary was that Bai Xiaochun spotted... a golden design on the surface of the arrow!!

“Golden design....” Although he initially wasn't certain what that

golden design was, it sent his mind spinning, and within moments, he had reached a conclusion.

“That’s... a precious treasure which has received an elevenfold spirit enhancement!!”

A tenfold spirit enhancement led to ten silver designs, but the mark of an eleventh spirit enhancement was a single golden design!!

Bai Xiaochun’s speculation was correct. That arrow... was none other than a fire soul arrow with an elevenfold spirit enhancement!

Zhou Yixing felt that he had no other choice than to pull out this trump card of his that he had been hoping to save for some other occasion. It was a special item given to him by his clan to use as a last-ditch line of defense!!

It was a precious treasure with an elevenfold spirit enhancement, which, in combination with his ninefold spirit enhanced greatbow, was capable of killing Nascent Soul cultivators!

The fact that he was resorting to this arrow showed how much Zhou Yixing wanted to kill Bai Xiaochun.

“Time to die, Bai Xiaochun!” he roared as he knocked the arrow to the bow. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun’s hair was standing on end, and his pupils were constricted as a sensation of deadly crisis swept through him.

As of this moment, he was convinced that this arrow... could most definitely kill him!!

There was no time for thought or planning. As Zhou Yixing drew the bow, Bai Xiaochun let out a shout and opened his third eye. Instantly, Zhou Yixing shivered, and a confused expression appeared on his face as the hand he was using to draw the bowstring back suddenly stopped moving.

In that same moment, rumbling sounds could be heard as Bai

Xiaochun used the Living Mountain Incantation, and also stretched his hand out to call upon his Waterswamp Kingdom!

As the area around him turned into a watery swamp, he pulled his frigid qi back in, causing a tempest to rage around him. And yet, things weren't over yet. The power of the Undying Live Forever Technique surged around him, pushing his fleshly body power to the limit.

All of these things take some time to describe, but actually happened in the briefest of moments. A moment later, the star sigil on Zhou Yixing's forehead erupted with starlight, breaking him free from Bai Xiaochun's control. As sweat began to drip down his face, he released the bowstring. Then, a thrumming sound could be heard... as a fire soul arrow with an elevenfold spirit enhancement flew forth!

The instant it left the bow, it transformed into a huge fire dragon, extremely lifelike in appearance. As the dragon shot toward Bai Xiaochun, it ran into the frigid qi tempest, shattering it, and then continued forward until it ran into a huge spike that was rising up from the ground.

As a deafening boom rocked the corridor, Bai Xiaochun leapt into the air, transforming into an enormous stone golem. Extending his right hand, he unleashed the Mountain Shaking Bash and then the Throat Crushing Grasp, using all the power of a living mountain and his fleshly body in one massive attack.

After all, this arrow could kill a Nascent Soul cultivator, and therefore, he had no hope of being able to evade it!

His only hope now... was to capture it!

As his Gold Core spun rapidly, a black light suddenly flashed out from inside of him as his turtle-wok appeared to block the fire soul arrow.

A huge boom echoed out as the two connected, and the fire soul

arrow even let out something like a miserable shriek as a shockwave rolled out. However, because all of these things were happening so quickly, and because Bai Xiaochun's current position blocked Zhou Yixing's line of sight, he couldn't see exactly what was happening.

Just when the fire soul arrow was about to collapse into pieces, Bai Xiaochun used the power of his fleshly body and the strength of a living mountain, as well as the force of the Mountain Shaking Bash and the Throat Crushing Grasp, to reach out and grab the throat of the fire dragon. Then, the might of the Undying Hex surged out to prevent the arrow from exploding!

Massive rumbling filled the tunnel, and the intense shockwave that spread out caused blood to spray out of the mouth of Zhou Yixing as he tumbled backward like a kite with its string cut, his expression a mix of disbelief and shock.

How could he ever have guessed that his fire soul arrow, which could kill a Nascent Soul expert, would be grabbed by Bai Xiaochun!?

As soon as Bai Xiaochun laid his hand on the fire soul arrow, his Waterswamp Kingdom spike collapsed, and his frigid qi faded away. His stone golem form shattered, and he was revealed, coughing up a cloud of blood.

He was thrown backward, his layers of armor disintegrating into ash, and yet, his hand held fast onto the arrow. The struggling fire dragon roared and fought, but in the end... it shrank back down into an arrow!

"Impossible!!" Zhou Yixing cried, his eyes nearly popping out of his skull. Panting as a sensation of deadly crisis filled him, he looked at the unbelievable scene playing out in front of him, his heart filled with terror. Finally, he drew upon the star sigil on his forehead, which began to pulse with the power of teleportation.

Bai Xiaochun slowly looked up, his eyes bloodshot, his killing

intent burning as he took a step forward. “Time to die, Zhou Yixing!”

That step almost seemed to land directly on Zhou Yixing’s heart. He trembled visibly, and let out an involuntary shriek. If his fire soul arrow couldn’t kill this opponent, then what could? Mind spinning and having no time to think, he pushed down onto his forehead, causing a massive burst of starlight to pour out of his star sigil, which wrapped around him and teleported him away.

He didn’t dare to do anything other than flee. At the moment, the mere thought of Bai Xiaochun left him terrified.

Bai Xiaochun coughed up a mouthful of blood as Zhou Yixing was whisked away, after which his jaw dropped.

“I can’t believe he ran away so quickly. I didn’t even get to finish coughing up that blood....” As soon as Bai Xiaochun had sensed the power of teleportation coming from Zhou Yixing’s star sigil, he had intentionally coughed up some blood to try to make himself look weak. His plan had been to trick Zhou Yixing into staying behind, and then show off how powerful he really was.

Ideally, he would have ended up killing Zhou Yixing. However, in defiance of all his expectations, Zhou Yixing didn’t even wait for him to cough up the blood before vanishing.

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun pulled out a Godly Vestige Pill and consumed it. As he began to recover from the fight, he looked down at the arrow in his hand and then began to laugh merrily.

“I probably shouldn’t kill this Zhou Yixing anyway. Every time we fight, he ends up giving me a precious item. Nine-colored flame. A soul arrow with an elevenfold spirit enhancement. Hahaha! Hmm... there’s also that bow of his.” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he excitedly thought back to the fight which had just played out.

The arrow had been incredibly powerful, so much so that he had

been terrified of it. If it wasn't for his use of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye and the protection of the turtle-wok, he would either have been captured, or absolutely destroyed!

Chapter 547: Ssshhh...

“That was really a nice bow....” Bai Xiaochun thought, licking his lips. The more he pondered how amazing the bow was, the more excited he got, and at the same time, realized he had put on too good of an act earlier. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have ended up scaring his lucky star away.

“I probably shouldn’t call him Mr. Gorilla in the future. What a pity this labyrinth is so big. Most likely I won’t run into him again.” Sighing, he realized that he already missed Zhou Yixing.

A moment later, he looked back down at the fire soul arrow with its elevenfold spirit enhancement. The arrow only continued to leave him more shaken, especially with the way it seemed to flicker back and forth between illusory and corporeal. The longer he looked at it, the more he felt like it was tugging at his own soul.

“Is the arrow itself extraordinary, or... or is it the elevenfold spirit enhancement that’s made it so incredible?!” Taking a deep breath, he thought back to the Heavenhorn Sword back in the River-Defying Sect, with its tenfold spirit enhancement. How might that sword change if it had an elevenfold enhancement? Presumably, it would be even more incredible than before.

“What an awesome arrow,” he thought, quickly putting the arrow into his bag of holding. Patting his bag contentedly, he mused that he really had profited well by coming into the labyrinth.

“Hmmmmphh. I bet nobody in this labyrinth is richer than me, not even that deva. I’ve got stuff in my bag of holding that would shock even him!” Although he was quite proud of himself, he also couldn’t forget all of the ordeals from the past several days, and the bizarre things that had occurred. That left him feeling a bit stiff, and drove away any feelings of pride. He even had to remind himself that he mustn’t allow himself to grow lax in his caution.

“No amount of riches is worth more than my poor little life!” Shaking his head, he looked around cautiously before proceeding forward.

Meanwhile, in a tunnel not too far away from Bai Xiaochun, starlight swirled, and Zhou Yixing stepped out into the open, coughing up a mouthful of blood.

By this point, the star sigil on his forehead was visibly cracked, and looked like it might collapse at any moment. Zhou Yixing felt like weeping about it, although he currently had no tears to shed.

“It’s all your fault, Bai Xiaochun!!” he raged as he stood there trembling and ashen-faced. “You took my nine-colored flame and my fire soul arrow. Damn you, Bai Xiaochun!! If it wasn’t for you, I never would have even come here. Damn you and damn this labyrinth!!”

Zhou Yixing felt like he was hovering on the verge of going insane. As of this moment, he only had one teleportation left before his star sigil was destroyed for good.

Before entering the labyrinth, he couldn’t have possibly guessed that it would be so dangerous, and that he would have to rely on the power of his star sigil so many times. By now, he completely regretted his decision.

“I absolutely, positively must not run into any of those bizarre entities.... And I definitely have to avoid Bai Xiaochun.... I can’t believe my fire soul arrow didn’t kill him. He’s completely inhuman!” Sighing, he began to creep forward, mind focused on a single thing: finding the exit, leaving, and never coming back. As for Bai Xiaochun... he had already made a decision. After he got back home, he would ask his entire family to track him down and kill him.

As Zhou Yixing was resolving to avoid Bai Xiaochun at all costs, Bai Xiaochun was proceeding through the labyrinth, feeling dizzy from how all the walls looked exactly the same.

“Where is that exit...?” he thought anxiously. “This is crazy! I’m totally turned around. Alright, whatever. I’ll just count this intersection as my starting point!”

Taking a deep breath, he took out a jade slip and then continued with his previous custom of sticking to the right. This time, however, he tried to take measured, uniform steps. At the same time, he began to trace out his path in the jade slip. It took patience, but he stuck with it. Whenever he reached intersections, he would pick the right-hand side. Gradually, an outline of his route began to take shape in the jade slip.

A few more days went by. By this point, he had been in the labyrinth for nearly a month.

Thankfully, he had plenty of spirit alcohol, which helped him keep his cultivation base and battle prowess sufficiently powered. However, he would still run into occasional situations in which he needed to draw upon spirit energy, and after a few more months passed, he began to run low on spirit alcohol.

Bai Xiaochun’s anxiety continued to build, and he started to lose track of time. One day, he suddenly saw movement up ahead of him in the corridor.

“Who’s there?!” he said loudly, pulling out his Eternal Parasol.

However, whoever it was up ahead completely ignored him and kept moving. Heart pounding, Bai Xiaochun was about to start backing away when he suddenly saw clearly who it was up ahead of him, and his jaw dropped.

It was one of the cultivators from the Great Wall, someone he recognized. However, to his shock, he realized that the man’s eyes were completely blank, and his face was slack and expressionless....

His cultivation base seemed to have slipped back down into Foundation Establishment, and even more strange was the fact

that he wasn't really walking! His feet dragged on the ground, and although he wasn't floating through the air, it almost seemed like he was being pushed along from behind.

The man didn't seem to notice Bai Xiaochun, who stood there wondering exactly what was going on. He thought about taking the initiative to attack him, but then hesitated and decided not to inadvertently provoke him. Instead, he simply stepped to the side and watched him closely as he passed by.

The entire time, the man didn't stop or even look at him. He just walked on by. That was when Bai Xiaochun's gaze fell upon the man's back, and suddenly, he felt all the hair on his body stand up on end.

"Wh-wh... wha... what is that?!" Backing up, his face drained of blood as he looked at what was sticking to the man's back. It was... a life-size person made of paper!!

The paper person had arms, legs, and a head with a lifelike face! It was stuck to the cultivator's back as if it had always been a part of him, and yet, Bai Xiaochun could tell that life force and cultivation base power was flowing constantly from the cultivator into the paper person.

The paper person's eyes were closed, but Bai Xiaochun could clearly see that its expression, and also its facial features, were slowly coming to resemble the cultivator it was stuck to.

The bizarreness of the spectacle caused Bai Xiaochun to shiver in fear, and even place his hand over his mouth from the horror. Worried that he might attract the attention of the paper person, he simply watched the cultivator trundle off into the distance. Then he breathed a sigh of relief.

"What the hell is this place...?" he thought. Whether it was the red hats, the blood-soaked buns, or this paper person, everything gave him a feeling of terror.

Furthermore, the paper person seemed like something that couldn't be fought against using the cultivation base, but rather, something that affected the soul directly.

After everything which had occurred so far, Bai Xiaochun was feeling very jumpy. Not daring to continue in the direction he had been heading, he picked a new path and continued to try to keep track of his progress. However, despite his vigilance, he soon realized that there were five people up ahead. Two were Great Wall cultivators, two were soul cultivators, and there was even a savage giant. Furthermore, all of them were trudging along just like the cultivator he had seen earlier.

Because they were walking away from him, and thus had their backs to him, he could see that there were paper people stuck to all of them....

Sucking in a quiet breath, he began to back up, and then picked another direction. However, to his shock, it wasn't long before he ran into a group of ten cultivators, all of whom had paper people stuck to their backs....

"Dammit, what's going on?" Bai Xiaochun anxiously picked a new path to follow, and after a bit of time passed and he didn't see any paper people, he finally breathed a sigh of relief. The next day, as he was walking along, he suddenly stopped in place when he realized that someone was heading toward him at top speed from up ahead.

It was a soul cultivator, and as soon as the man caught sight of him, his expression turned grim. After sizing Bai Xiaochun up to get a sense of his power, he snorted coldly and continued to fly through the air at top speed...

Originally, Bai Xiaochun had been happy to find that the man's expression wasn't blank like all the other people he had seen recently, and was about to call out a greeting. However, when the man flew past him, Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide.

There on the soul cultivator's back was a paper person! Clearly, the man had no idea the paper person was there. A moment later, the paper person's eyes opened and it looked at Bai Xiaochun with an odd smile. Then it raised a finger to its lips and pursed its lips as if to say sshhh....

Apparently, it was telling Bai Xiaochun that it was involved in a game of hide-and-seek, and that he shouldn't say anything....

Bai Xiaochun was so scared that his face went completely ashen. Goosebumps broke out all over him, and he even began to sweat. Worried about some misunderstanding with the paper person, he nodded, and even slapped his chest to emphasize that he wouldn't speak up....

The paper person seemed to understand, and nodded in satisfaction before closing its eyes again.

After the soul cultivator disappeared into the distance, Bai Xiaochun wiped the sweat from his brow.

“These paper people must be able to sneak up on you without you ever realizing it....” Nervous, he suddenly looked over his shoulder.

Chapter 548: I'll Take Off Now...Ssshhh...

Bai Xiaochun whipped his head around with lightning speed, and gave no advance warning that he would do so. However, he didn't see anything attached to his back. He even reached up with his hand and felt around to make sure there was nothing there, before breathing a sigh of relief.

“Alright, good. There's nothing on my back.” Even still, he was very nervous about the whole situation. The soul cultivator from moments ago was the first person he had encountered recently who had seemed conscious. And yet, the fact that he still had a paper person on his back was very telling, and was also quite confusing to Bai Xiaochun.

After glancing around, he wasn't quite sure what to do. Finally, he gritted his teeth and picked a new direction to head in.

He continued to encounter more cultivators, almost as if they had been gathering in this area. That would explain why he had gone for so long without seeing anyone. However, almost everyone he encountered had a blank expression and a paper person on their back.

Those who were lucid were often fleeing madly through the tunnels, or even thrashing about as they tried to grab at their backs. Others were ripping their clothing off. However, nothing anybody did could stop the paper people from sticking to them....

Everything that was happening had Bai Xiaochun jumping at his own shadow, and constantly looking over his shoulder. Occasionally, he would encounter locations with magical nodes on the ground, upon which lay paper people, apparently absorbing energy.

Bai Xiaochun was slowly slipping into a panic, and resorted to increasingly higher speed. He tried to skirt around any areas that had paper people, and eventually noticed that he was encountering

fewer and fewer cultivators. However, for some reason, everything seemed to be getting more frightening and more cold, to the point where his hair started to stand on end. Finally, he stopped and picked a different direction.

However, the next day, Bai Xiaochun was startled to discover that no matter which direction he picked, the sinister coldness only continued to grow stronger.

“Don’t come after me....” he muttered, scowling on the verge of tears. Heart burning with anxiety, he rotated his cultivation base to push the sinister coldness away from him.

However, despite reducing its effects a bit, he couldn’t prevent it from touching him.... One day as he was rushing nervously through the tunnels, he caught sight of a pile of corpses!

There were more than a thousand of them, and without exception, they all had paper people on them!

The paper people appeared to be either sleeping or absorbing energy from the corpses. In fact, many of the corpses had more than one paper person on them, with some having as many as seven or eight....

What caused Bai Xiaochun’s eyes to go wider than anything else was one gray-robed necromancer who had dozens of paper people wrapped around him and absorbing his energy.

The necromancer wasn’t dead, and apparently, was still aware of what was happening. However, his eyes were completely filled with despair. Shuddering with fear, Bai Xiaochun murmured, “This place must be a paper person hive!!”

From what he could tell, there were at least two thousand paper people in the area!

“They can’t see me. They can’t see me....” Fearful of attracting their attention, and worrying that he was disturbing their mealtime, he quietly began to tiptoe backward.

However, before he could take even five steps, one of the dozens of paper people on the necromancer looked up, almost as if it had smelled something. Sniffing the air, it turned to look at Bai Xiaochun, and then its eyes began to shine with strange light.

Bai Xiaochun was nearly scared out of his mind, and stopped moving. Swallowing hard, he looked back at the paper person, and then slowly raised his finger to his lips and said sshhh.

The paper person seemed surprised, and a moment later, lowered its head. Relieved, Bai Xiaochun was just preparing to back up again, when all of a sudden another of the paper people looked up at him.

Tears welling up in his eyes, he said, "I didn't mean to disturb you guys. Eat up, alright? I'll... I'll just take off now. Sshhh...." However, before he could continue to back up, the paper people that were looking at him suddenly began to let out a round ear-piercing shrieks.

It was a sound that could batter at the soul itself, and by the time the second round of shrieks filled the air, all two thousand of the paper people in the area had looked up, and many of them were flying toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was almost scared witless. Screaming, he turned and fled for his life.

"You people don't play fair! I... I saw one of your friends earlier, and when he asked me to sshhh I didn't break his cover...."

Soon, Bai Xiaochun had disappeared into one of the nearby tunnels, being chased by two thousand paper people. After everything went silent, the area with the corpses suddenly went very quiet, and a bit later, a mist began to build up.

The mist covered the corpses, which then started withering up rapidly. In the blink of an eye, they became nothing more than ash.

Not even their bags of holding or magical items could stand up to the mist, and were soon gone. Then, the mist began to converge upon itself, wriggling and twitching as it formed into a humanoid shape.

As the shape took form, it became a young woman, extraordinarily beautiful, the smile on her face covered by a hand. If anyone had been present to witness that smile, they would have been struck cold with terror from how bizarre it was.

She had long black hair, and a curvaceous figure that her ocean-blue robe could do nothing to conceal. She was none other than Gongsun Wan'er!

As of this point, the second pupil in each of her eyes had a figure visible within it, the face of a young girl, who was also smiling.

“Don't be scared, big bro. They're just playing hide-and-seek with you, that's all....” Despite the softness of her voice, her expression was ice cold as she took a step forward, dissolving yet again into a mist that spread out in all directions.

Somewhere off in the distance, Bai Xiaochun was shrieking and sweating as he fled from the two thousand paper people. No matter how fast he went, they stuck with him. It was almost as if there was some strange connection between them and him that enabled them to match his speed.

Bai Xiaochun was nearly convulsing with fear as he barreled down the tunnels, downing one bottle of spirit alcohol after another. He kept up top speed for more than an hour, and yet to this despair, found that even after that time, he hadn't managed to shake a single paper person.

None of his divine abilities or magical techniques did anything to help. His frigid domain didn't affect the paper people, and although his Eternal Parasol was strong enough to stave off one or two at a time, there were too many overall.

Plus, if he slowed down at all, they would rush toward him without stopping.

The idea of being buried in a pile of two thousand paper people, all of whom wanted to suck him dry until he was a pile of bones, left him shivering in terror.

“I didn’t do anything to offend you people? What are you chasing me for?!”

He even thought about using his Waterswamp Kingdom to see if it could take out some of the paper people, but it cost far too much spiritual power to use, which meant he needed to save it for only the most critical of moments.

After all, the amount of spiritual power it took to use the Waterswamp Kingdom one time was enough to keep him moving at top speed for a full day.

“Dammit! Alright, I’ll keep running for two more hours, and if the paper people are still chasing me, then I’ll try out my Waterswamp Kingdom!” Gritting his teeth, he continued to move along at top speed.

An hour flew by, and Bai Xiaochun was feeling more hopeless than ever. He hadn’t run into a single other person, and was dejected to find that the paper people didn’t ever seem to get tired. He felt like he was about to go mad, and was just thinking about using the Waterswamp Kingdom when he noticed a young man flying toward him. As the young man got closer, it was clear that he was trembling. And then he saw the two thousand paper people behind Bai Xiaochun, which caused him to gasp, and then turn to flee in the other direction.

However, despite how quickly this newcomer reacted, Bai Xiaochun still managed to get a look at his face.

First, he was shocked, and then, delighted! “Zhou Yixing!”

Chapter 549: Your Comeuppance Is At Hand, Bai Xiaochun

Bai Xiaochun was extremely happy to see Zhou Yixing, and felt like he had just run into an old friend. After all, he hadn't seen any other living beings for quite some time.

To unexpectedly run into Zhou Yixing right here left Bai Xiaochun feeling as if the two of them were connected by destiny somehow.

Plus, the fact that he ended up profiting handsomely every time they met got him very excited.

“Don’t run, Zhou Yixing!” he shouted. “I’m not gonna take that bow of yours! Get the attention of these 2,000 paper people, okay, my lucky star!?”

The joy in Bai Xiaochun’s voice caused Zhou Yixing to tremble on the verge of insanity. He truly felt as if he had fallen into more bad luck than was possible in one lifetime....

“You’re the lucky star! Everyone in your family is a lucky star!!!” Rage filled him at how sharp Bai Xiaochun's eyes were. Just now, Zhou Yixing had spun around as quickly as possible, and yet somehow, had still been recognized. Then, he’d been called ‘lucky star,’ which pushed him deeper into madness, to the point where he felt like he was going to collapse.

During his recent travels through the labyrinth, he had prayed constantly that he never meet Bai Xiaochun again, and yet... that was exactly what had happened!

“Oh heavens, why? This labyrinth is so big, why did you have me run into this damnable Bai Xiaochun!?” This was the third time Zhou Yixing had encountered Bai Xiaochun, and by this time, he was sure he had worse luck than anyone in the world.

During their first meeting, he lost his nine-colored flame. Then

he had his fire soul arrow taken away. The third time, Bai Xiaochun came running at him with 2,000 paper people in pursuit....

Zhou Yixing had been just as terrified recently by the paper people as Bai Xiaochun had. To see more than 2,000 of them in one place had him terrified to the extreme.

“Do I owe him a debt from a previous life or something!?!?” Eyes bloodshot and expression twisted from rage, he turned to glare viciously at Bai Xiaochun.

“You want my help to get the attention of those paper people?” he yelled. “Fine! Since you have a death wish, I guess that means fate has put you in my hands to be killed today!!” Zhou Yixing was convinced that by taking advantage of the paper people, he would be able to have his chance to kill Bai Xiaochun!

“The perfect opportunity!” Howling, he threw caution to the wind, pulling out his black greatbow with its ninefold spirit enhancement. Then, he pulled the bowstring back and unleashed a succession of 36 soul arrows, simultaneously flying backward away from Bai Xiaochun!

36 was Zhou Yixing’s limit, and was such a strain that he was already coughing up blood. And yet, that was how much he hated Bai Xiaochun! All the way down to the bones!

The 36 soul arrows screamed through the air toward Bai Xiaochun, whose face fell at the realization that, in his excitement at running into his lucky star, he had pushed things too far. The truth was that this really was the perfect opportunity for Zhou Yixing to kill Bai Xiaochun.

“I can't believe you're being such a bully, Mr. Gorilla!” he shouted. As the 36 soul arrows closed in, it was clear that they were locked onto his position, and that he couldn't dodge them. Considering that there were paper people right behind him, it put him in a very dangerous position. Therefore, he waved his right

hand and snapped the Eternal Parasol open.

Then, the 36 soul arrows all exploded, and Zhou Yixing mockingly shouted, “Your comeuppance is at hand, Bai Xiaochun!”

Ignoring any injuries it would wreak upon him, he took a breath and launched another 30 arrows.

The arrows slashed through the air like lighting, instantly reaching Bai Xiaochun’s position and then exploding with incredible force. Even if Bai Xiaochun were stronger than he already was, he couldn’t have done anything other than fall back in the face of such an attack.

As he did, the 2,000 paper people increased their speed, closing the distance in the blink of an eye.

Bizarre smiles could be seen on the faces of the screaming paper people, and looks of greed and madness filled their eyes as they pounced toward Bai Xiaochun.

Off in the distance, Zhou Yixing watched what was happening with such excitement that he was shaking. Then he threw his head back and laughed at the top of his lungs.

“I didn’t kill you, Bai Xiaochun, this is just the will of the heavens!!” Zhou Yixing felt wonderful at being able to instantly rid himself of the depression that had gripped him so deeply recently.

As Zhou Yixing watched the paper people pouncing toward Bai Xiaochun, he cackled madly and then said, “Bai Xiaochun, you--”

However, before he could finish speaking, his eyes went wide, and his words stuck in his throat!

“Impossible!” To Zhou Yixing’s shock, one glimmering shield after another had sprung up around Bai Xiaochun, until there were more than a thousand of them, creating a 30-meter-thick barrier around him.

As the shields spread out, the paper people who had been

pouncing on Bai Xiaochun stuck to its surface.

However, because there were so many of them, they ended up looking like a huge paper ball!

Inside of the paper ball, Bai Xiaochun was drenched in the sweat of fear. In the heat of the moment, he had been too short on time to use his Waterswamp Kingdom, and therefore, had resorted to defensive talismans to stop the advance of the paper people.

After confirming that the shields were effective against the paper people, he looked through the cracks in their arms and legs at the gaping Zhou Yixing off in the distance.

“Zhou Yixing!” he bellowed, then began to move in his direction!

Zhou Yixing’s jaw dropped, and his mind began to spin as the huge paper ball began to speed in his direction. The sheer number of paper people that huge ball represented caused Zhou Yixing’s scalp to tingle so hard it felt like it might explode.

“He’s still not dead!?!?” he blurted in rage. Spinning, he began to flee, and yet despite the speed he was capable of, was no match for Bai Xiaochun.

“What do I do? What do I do!?!? Don’t tell me I’m really going to have to resort to my final star sigil teleportation!?!?” Swept up in a feeling of madness, he gritted his teeth and prepared to unleash the starlight within the star sigil. However, that was when he suddenly realized that the 2,000 paper people stuck to the surface of the shields were actually absorbing their power, which was causing the paper ball to shrink.

“Hmm?” Enthused, Zhou Yixing immediately abandoned his plan to teleport away. Heart thumping with excitement, he came to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun was actually shooting himself in the foot, and once his shield disappeared, he would be killed in body and soul.

Feeling more thrilled with every moment that passed, Zhou

Yixing proceeded onward, keeping an eye on what was happening behind him and even laughing at the situation.

Suddenly, a rumbling sound echoed out from the paper ball, startling Zhou Yixing. However, after confirming that it was maintaining the same speed as before, he calmed down.

“Let’s see how long you manage to hold out, Bai Xiaochun!”

Inside the paper ball, Bai Xiaochun was chuckling coldly, and thought about what Zhou Yixing’s reaction would be to the fact that... he could pull hundreds of thousands of paper talismans out of his bag of holding if he felt like it.

“Hmph. If I pulled them all out at one time, you would definitely freak out!” However, Bai Xiaochun was still worried. After all, he didn’t have an endless supply of talismans, and would run out of them eventually. Looking around at the paper people absorbing the energy of the shields, he quickly came to the conclusion that they found the shields to be delicious.

Heart pounding, he put some more thought into the matter, then pulled out another paper talisman and threw it off to the side. Sure enough, some of the paper people immediately pounced on it and began to absorb it happily.

Eyes flickering, Bai Xiaochun looked at Zhou Yixing fleeing off into the distance, and then decided to take one more risk.

Chapter 550: There's... Something On My Back!

Because Bai Xiaochun was mostly out of sight inside the paper ball, and also because Zhou Yixing had to focus on moving ahead, he didn't see what had just happened. He was excited, only occasionally looking back to see how much the paper ball had shrunk.

By this point, the ball had already shrunk from its previous size of 30 meters down to about half of that.

In addition, Bai Xiaochun was slowing down, as if he were about to succumb to exhaustion. Zhou Yixing could even hear him let out a howl of seeming despair.

“Your comeuppance is at hand, Bai Xiaochun!” Feeling almost completely free from care or worry, Zhou Yixing laughed loudly and pondered how all of this had been carefully planned out and executed by none other than himself.

“When I want someone dead, that person wouldn't dare to try and stay alive!” Laughing, he looked back at Bai Xiaochun slowing down, the paper ball having shrunk down to roughly 9 meters. By this point, Zhou Yixing was confident enough to stop in place to watch Bai Xiaochun be reduced to a desiccated corpse.

“Zhou Yixing!” Inside the paper ball, Bai Xiaochun was looking quite flustered. No matter how he yelled out in anger, his speed continued to drop, until he couldn't even move forward. Of course, his struggles pleased Zhou Yixing to no end, who was now staring fixedly to watch the final result.

“Yell all you want,” he said with a chuckle. “Even if you yell your throat out, nobody will come to save you!” Zhou Yixing was pleased as punch at how little effort he was now expending. As for the shield surrounding Bai Xiaochun, it was now so small that it

was impossible to catch even a glimpse of him inside of all the paper!

It was a critical moment in which Zhou Yixing nervously watched what was happening, and was even visualizing what would happen next. In his mind, the paper ball would soon break through the shield, and Bai Xiaochun would scream miserably as he was destroyed in body and soul.

Not only could he keep a record of everything that was happening, but he would be able to take Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding in the end. Then he could draw upon the final bit of teleportation power in his star sigil, and go get his reward of a full set of five elements deva beast souls!

Even as he excitedly contemplated that outcome, he saw the paper ball collapse, causing him to crane his neck forward to observe the outcome....

In the exact same moment that the ball collapsed, a huge clump of paper talismans suddenly flew out into the air, a development which occurred so quickly that Zhou Yixing could never have reacted in time. In the blink of an eye, all of the paper talismans landed on the ground right in front of him.

Zhou Yixing's jaw dropped, and before he could do anything, the paper talismans exploded, causing numerous shield layers to spring up around him.

The talismans were defensive in nature, and quickly spread out to surround Zhou Yixing. At the same time, all of the paper people near Bai Xiaochun suddenly turned over to look in Zhou Yixing's direction. Completely ignoring Bai Xiaochun, their eyes lit up with madness as they pounced onto the shields surrounding Zhou Yixing!

All of these things take some time to describe, but from the moment the shield around Bai Xiaochun collapsed until the paper talismans landed in front of Zhou Yixing and the paper people

pounced, only two breaths of time had passed.

Zhou Yixing's face fell, and his mind began to spin. Things were turning out exactly the opposite of how he had imagined. Screaming, he tried to back up, but it was too late. The paper people moved so quickly that in the following moment, Zhou Yixing found himself in exactly the same situation Bai Xiaochun had just been in.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he bellowed in rage, his heart quivering with regret and madness. “Shameless! Completely shameless!! You will not die a good death, Bai Xiaochun!!”

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was fleeing madly. The situation he had just been in was far too dangerous for his liking. Now that Zhou Yixing had replaced him, he forgot about his desire to get his bow and fled without hesitation.

“My poor little life is worth way more than that bow. I guess Zhou Yixing still counts as my lucky star!” When he looked over his shoulder at the shrinking paper ball, he worried that the paper people might still notice him and give chase, so he tried to get as far away as possible.

Meanwhile, Zhou Yixing was inside the paper ball, looking around in sullen fury as the paper people got closer and closer to him. Soon, tears began to leak out of the corners of his eyes.

At the moment, he had no time to ponder how Bai Xiaochun was the bane of his existence. Instead, he reached up and pushed down onto his forehead.

Rumbling sounds then echoed out as starlight filled the area, and the power of teleportation erupted. When the starlight faded away, Zhou Yixing was nowhere to be seen. Within a few moments, the paper people had completely devoured all of the shields, whereupon they scattered and began to search the area. When they found nothing, they drifted off into different random directions.

In a tunnel somewhere else in the labyrinth, starlight glimmered, and Zhou Yixing stepped out, coughing up blood. He did nothing to hold it back, leaning up against the wall as blood spilled out from inside of him. Then he chuckled bitterly.

As for the star sigil on his forehead, it gradually grew dimmer, until finally, it crumbled into ash and blew away....

“My star sigil is gone....” he lamented. As he thought back to everything which had occurred with Bai Xiaochun, he felt more than ever that he was the bane of his existence. More tears began to pour down his cheeks. “I’m not going to try to kill him. I hope... I hope I never see him again for the rest of my life!!!”

In that moment, Zhou Yixing seemed to age significantly. He had been wounded both physically and mentally, and was even starting to question the purpose of his own life....

In sharp contrast to Zhou Yixing’s bitter grief, Bai Xiaochun was in extremely high spirits. He felt like he had just survived a major tribulation, and had finally secured safety for his poor little life.

He wasn’t even angry about Zhou Yixing’s previous treachery. After all, without Zhou Yixing there, he might not be alive right now.

He had even gone to the lengths of sacrificing himself to save Bai Xiaochun.

“Ah whatever. If we’re connected by destiny, Brother Zhou, then you’ll probably make it out alive yourself. I hope we have a chance to meet again one day.” Relishing the thought of what might happen then, Bai Xiaochun hurried along his way.

However, as he walked through the tunnels, he started getting the feeling that something was off. He suddenly whipped around to check his back, but didn’t see anything. Reaching over his shoulder, he fumbled around with his hand, but couldn’t feel anything.

Unsure of whether he was just imagining things, he kept going. Eventually, he noticed a Great Wall cultivator approaching from the other direction looking very nervous, as if he had just survived some dangerous ordeal.

When their eyes met, Bai Xiaochun could instantly see that the man was terrified....

A moment later, the cultivator bowed his head and stepped to the side to allow Bai Xiaochun to pass. Bai Xiaochun was thinking of asking the cultivator some questions, but quickly dismissed the idea when he realized the man had a paper person on his back.

Bai Xiaochun immediately sped up, flying past the cultivator. Some distance away, he looked over his shoulder to find the cultivator rushing toward him aggressively. But then, the man suddenly stopped in place and nodded in terror....

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had noticed him, he shrieked and fled.

Bai Xiaochun was at first taken aback, but then he thought back to when he had seen one of the paper people on someone else's back. That paper person had said sshhh, and he had nodded in response....

The nod of the cultivator just now had seemed very similar, and at that point, Bai Xiaochun's terror began to mount....

"There's no way I have a paper person on my back...." he thought, his mind spinning. Face turning ashen, he looked over his shoulder over and over again until his neck hurt. However, he didn't see anything. Unfortunately, divine sense was suppressed in the labyrinth, making it impossible to use it to scan himself. Even reaching around with his hands didn't reveal anything....

Finally, he decided to pull out his copper mirror, but still couldn't see anything on his back.

He proceeded onward, filled with suspicions. As time went on, his expression turned more and more unsightly, until he was

absolutely certain that there was something on his back.

Scared out of his mind, and hair standing on end, he breathed, “There’s... there’s something on my back!”

Chapter 551: I'll Be A Good Boy...

Bai Xiaochun let out a yelp of fear, and looked over his shoulder, trembling. He also fumbled around behind his back. And yet, he still didn't have any evidence that anything was there.

However, the feeling only kept getting stronger, to the point where he felt like he couldn't breathe.

"There's definitely something there!" Tears welling up in his eyes, he let out a shout as he plastered some paper talismans onto him. And yet, after the shield layers sprang up, he still felt the same.

No matter what he did, he felt like there was someone clinging to him.

"How come nothing works...?" he thought nervously. Gritting his teeth, he unleashed the Living Mountain Incantation, transforming into a stone golem and then back again. Despite that, he still felt like something was there.

In fact, the sensation was even stronger. Most terrifying of all was that Bai Xiaochun was sure that whoever was behind him was absorbing his life force.

"No... that's my longevity!" he wailed. "That's my chance to live forever! I don't want this! Come on, let's talk things over. Just get off my back...."

He even pulled out the Eternal Parasol and poked it over his shoulder, but whoever was stuck to his back refused to budge.

Bai Xiaochun was starting to feel confused, and he even went so far as to use his Waterswamp Kingdom. However, nothing changed....

"What am I supposed to do? Don't tell me that I, Bai Xiaochun, am going to lose my life right here!? I refuse to accept this! I'm still young! I haven't even gotten married yet. I haven't had kids...."

And yet, in his fury and grief, he only continued to descend into confusion.

He started to look a bit listless as he trudged along, even staggering a bit, almost as if he were being pushed forward from behind.

The truth was that he did have a paper person on his back, as if it had always been a part of him. Furthermore, it was greedily sucking away at his cultivation base and life force.

This paper person was different from the others, though. It wasn't white. It... was red!

Furthermore, it had six eyes, which opened and closed continuously in a very strange fashion.

As he walked along, he didn't notice how, when other paper people would appear near him and look at him greedily, they would subsequently notice the red paper person on his back, and then shiver and flee.

Eventually, he was completely alone, walking along in confusion and slowly transforming into something more like an old man.

However, at some point as he walked along, a fair, graceful female hand reached out, completely disregarding the presence of the red paper person, to land directly onto Bai Xiaochun's shoulder.

It was a smack that sent a tremor running through him, rousing him as if from sleep. Suddenly recalling everything which had been going on, he shrieked and leapt forward a few paces before spinning to look back.

What he saw caused his jaw to drop.

Right there in front of him was a beautiful woman in a long gown. She had an odd-looking smile on her face, and it even looked like she had some blood on her lips, as if she had just eaten something and forgotten to wipe her mouth. That young woman

was none other than...

“Gongsun Wan’er!!”

In her hand she held a red paper person, who was screaming and struggling as it tried to break free. However, such efforts were useless, and soon, a pleading look could be seen in the thing's eyes.

Looking down at the red paper person, Gongsun Wan’er smiled, and the second pupil in each of her eyes began to shine with cold light. “You really have some guts to bully my big bro.”

With that, she squeezed her fingers together, prompting the paper person to scream as it was crushed to bits!

Then, white wisps of smoke rose up and floated back toward Bai Xiaochun, which was none other than his lost life force being returned to him.

Face turning more ashen, he subconsciously backed up a few steps. For some reason, this version of Gongsun Wan’er seemed like a complete stranger to him.

As he thought back to his past memories, he was certain that it had been a very long time since he felt anything like this. In fact, now that he thought about it, he realized that Gongsun Wan’er had always seemed a bit different after he got back from the Blood Stream Sect.

Plus, the blood on her lips was clearly not her own; it had come from something she’d eaten. Bai Xiaochun immediately began to pant as a hair-raisingly terrifying feeling overwhelmed him.

The sinister coldness in the area far surpassed anything he had felt from the red hats or the blood-soaked buns. Not even the hive of paper people had been as cold as this.

Most shocking of all was how she had called him big bro, which, for some very odd reason, seemed familiar....

Voice quavering, he continued to back up as he said, “Uh...

Wan'er, it's you... what are you doing here...?"

He almost couldn't tear his eyes away from the blood on Gongsun Wan'er's lips.

Noticing his gaze, she reached up and touched her lips softly, then licked them clean and smiled at him. It was a smile that caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to go cold. He couldn't be certain whether he was imagining things or not, but he was almost sure he had seen a second mouth inside of her just now!

In addition, he could see that she had two pupils in each of her eyes!

He was shaking visibly and scared witless, and yet, that feeling of fear also stoked his anger. At the same time, cold sweat began to drip down his back.

Teeth chattering, he said, "Wan'er, I... I have an errand to run, so, um... see you later."

With that, he prepared to leave.

Gongsun Wan'er covered her smile with a hand, and said, "Ah, why don't you come play with me, big bro!?"

Strangely, her voice was different from before, and almost seemed like that of a child. As it echoed back and forth in the labyrinth tunnel, Bai Xiaochun's body went stiff, and his eyes went wide. The way she had called him big bro had already seemed familiar, and now that he heard that child's voice, his mind began to spin.

Shrieking, he backed up again, eyes filling with incredulity as he pointed at Gongsun Wan'er and blurted, "Wh-who... who... who are you?!?!"

"How could you have forgotten me, big bro?" Although her words were spoken softly, they crashed like thunder in Bai Xiaochun's mind. Memories flooded into his mind as he thought back to the Fallen Sword World, and how among the banesouls had

been a young girl holding a skinned, bloody teddy bear!!

“How is this possible?!?!” he thought, his mouth and throat going dry. He felt like he was going crazy, and couldn’t even breathe. It was almost like being hit in the head repeatedly with a big stick.

Gongsun Wan’er smiled at his reaction. Then she casually waved her right hand, causing a blood mist to spring up next to her, which rapidly converged together into the form of a tall man.

He was burly and well-built, but terrifyingly, had no skin. Blood-slicked muscles were all that could be seen, with occasional blue veins bulging out here and there.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw that burly man’s face, a name popped into his mind.

“Lei Shan!!”

This man had once been a chosen of the Profound Stream Sect. Lei Shan! Based on the cultivation base power rolling off of him, his strength was comparable to the Nascent Soul stage. However, his eyes were empty and vacant, almost as if he were a puppet.

“Just wait for me here, big bro,” Gongsun Wan’er said in her child’s voice. “I’m still not full yet. I’m going to take teddy to go get a bit more food, and then we can play together. You wait here like a good boy, now. I’ll be very upset if you disobey!” Smiling happily, she turned and skipped off into the distance, accompanied by Lei Shan, who walked alongside her with an expressionless face, the faint sounds of thunder rumbling out from him as he walked.

Bai Xiaochun watched all of this happen with an ashen face. He felt cold all the way down to his marrow, and had already decided that he wouldn’t wait around for Gongsun Wan’er and Lei Shan even if someone threatened to kill him. As of this moment, he finally put the pieces of the puzzle together, and realized that the terrifying young girl from the Fallen Sword Abyss had emerged

into the world in Gongsun Wan'er's body.

Whether it was the haunting of the River-Defying Sect or the deaths on the ship, all of them were carried out by that girl....

And then Bai Xiaochun remembered that she had originally transformed because of a medicinal pill he had concocted, and his heart flip-flopped.

“Um... don't worry!” he said loudly. “I'll be a good boy. I won't go anywhere.... Oh, by the way, there's a guy out there named Zhou Yixing. He's very fair and delicate, and clearly very delicious. Why don't you go play with him for a bit...?” After waiting for a bit to confirm that the girl was gone, he turned and fled.

Chapter 552: Realm of Trials By Fire

Bai Xiaochun had never harbored even the slightest intention of doing what Gongsun Wan'er told him to. As far as he was concerned, only an idiot would have sat there obediently waiting for her to come back.

“Think I’m a moron? That I’m just gonna sit around waiting?” As he fled nervously, he pondered how quickly she had trusted that he would do what she said.... “Well, all’s fair in both love and war. Whatever. It’s not like I’ll be around to find out what happens later anyway.”

Although he wasn’t sure of exactly what was going on, or what the girl was thinking, he continued to flee at top speed. As usual, he used his simplistic method of sticking to the right to try to find the exit.

A few days passed, over which he didn’t encounter anyone, and hadn’t run into any bizarre situations either. Because of that, he picked up speed, and eventually, the path of his movement as outlined in the jade slip became clearer. Eventually, he stopped and examined the would-be map.

Then he looked around at his surroundings for a moment. Although he couldn’t be absolutely sure, after examining the jade slip, he was fairly certain... that he had passed through this area before.

“So, this place is a big circle.... The labyrinth is made up of a whole bunch of massive, interconnecting concentric rings....

“What I have been assuming is the right-hand wall is actually the left-hand wall in other locations. They’re the same wall!

“In that case, there are two possibilities. The first is that all of the rings in the labyrinth are never-ending dead-ends, and only one of the rings has the exit!

“The other possibility is that none of the rings have an exit, and that the exit... is in some other location.” Bai Xiaochun rubbed his forehead and sighed. Despite how long he had been in the labyrinth, he had no idea whether or not anyone else had found the exit. Although it was a huge and complicated place, there were plenty of amazing geniuses among cultivators, so just because he hadn’t solved the puzzle didn’t mean no one else had.

Muttering a bit, he looked at the jade slip for a bit longer, then headed down a path that headed left, continuing to track his progress as he went along. Whenever he encountered a place that he thought he had passed before, he would pick a different path. However, the entire time, he generally continued to go to the right.

“I have to find a spot where this ring connects to the next ring.... It's got to be around here somewhere!” Gritting his teeth, he proceeded to search.

“There’s no guarantee that this method will find me the exit, but as long as nobody interferes and gets me lost again, I think it has a good chance of succeeding!”

Half a month later, Bai Xiaochun was looking a bit haggard. However, he had long since found a way into the next ring, and had also confirmed that it was also a never-ending dead end.

However, he didn’t give up looking for a way to the next ring.

As time crawled by, bad luck seemed to be further away than ever, and good luck seemed just around the corner. Another month passed by. By this point, Bai Xiaochun’s jade slip was filled with a complicated outline of the various paths he had traveled. As he moved along, he was constantly absorbed in studying the unfolding map. Eventually, he stopped in place and looked up to find that ahead of him was a wide-open square!

The square did not contain any candles or blood-soaked buns. Right in the middle of it was an altar with a glowing door atop it.

As soon as he saw that door, his heart swelled with excitement.

“Finally! I finally found it!!” Bai Xiaochun took a few moments to calm himself down. Furthermore, he didn’t just blindly charge toward the door. He took a moment to examine his surroundings, and after confirming that there wasn’t anything overtly dangerous, he began to slowly make his way forward. Soon, he was at the end of the tunnel and right at the border of the square, where he looked at the shining door and began to laugh loudly.

“What kind of crappy labyrinth is this anyway? With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun brought this place to the verge of becoming ash. Now, with a bit of thought on my part, I’ll finish the job and breeze through the exit.” Feeling very proud of himself, he flew toward the altar and the glowing door.

There was no rumbling or any other sound as he flew inside and disappeared.

His vision swam, and when it grew clear, he looked around and instantly began to tremble. In fact, he couldn’t even breathe.

There didn’t appear to be any ground in this place, just an empty void. Stretching out in all directions were numerous glowing spheres of starlight, well over a thousand of them.

Within each globe of starlight was a person. There were ordinary cultivators, soul cultivators and savage giants, all of them sitting cross-legged with their eyes closed, as if in meditation. Occasionally, the expressions on their faces would change. Some would grit their teeth, some would look elated. All sorts of different emotions could be seen.

Bai Xiaochun actually recognized many of the people in the spheres as people from both the Great Wall and the Wildlands who had gathered outside the labyrinth.

“It seems that more than a thousand other people got to the end of the labyrinth before me.” After looking around for only a

moment, he saw Chen Hetian, Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan.

Among those from the Wildlands, he spotted a woman in a long red gown... Mistress Red-Dust!

Mistress Red-Dust's glowing sphere was very eye-catching, sending dazzling light out in all directions, making it much brighter than any of the other spheres.

Not even the light of a hundred of the other glowing spheres would come close to hers.

After examining the situation a bit more closely, Bai Xiaochun realized that he was also surrounded by a glowing sphere of starlight, and that he was just another amongst the group of more than one thousand people floating within this starry sky.

In the middle of all the stars, floating there right in the boundless void, was a shocking, soul-stirring stone stele of enormous size!

Bai Xiaochun wasn't even able to tell exactly how large it was. It had words written on its surface describing the rules of the trials by fire here. Furthermore, each glowing sphere was connected to the stone stele by a faintly shimmering thread!

Bai Xiaochun trembled inwardly at the sight of this second stone stele, which looked similar to the first one outside the labyrinth. Based on the description written on the stone, passing a trial by fire here was the way to leave the labyrinth, and whoever took first place would acquire the deva soul.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun realized that he had definitely reached the end of the labyrinth, and entered the realm of the trials by fire.

“Deva souls are great and all, but my poor little life is most important. This place seems pretty safe, so I think the best thing will be to wait for someone else to get the deva soul, and then just leave....” With that, he reached out with both hands to touch the glowing sphere that surrounded him, to see if it was possible to

emerge from within it. Unfortunately, the sphere itself was an unbreakable barrier that was impossible to pass.

That actually made him very happy.

“Seems I was right. This place is great! Hahaha! If I can’t get out, then other people probably can’t get in. We can all just sit around in harmony!” He was quite pleased with how fair and considerate this realm of trials by fire was.

Even as he reveled in his delight, he noticed some starlight off in the distance forming into a glowing sphere. Inside, a shadowy figure appeared who quickly became distinct.

“Zhou Yixing!”

Zhou Yixing looked very excited at having been able to find the exit. Just like Bai Xiaochun had, he looked around at his surroundings and almost immediately noticed the shocking stone stele. After a bit of time passed... he saw Bai Xiaochun.

When their gazes met, Zhou Yixing’s eyes went wide.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he laughed heartily. Apparently, Zhou Yixing really was Bai Xiaochun’s lucky star. Not only had he luckily escaped death, but he had also found the exit. Even though Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure if Zhou Yixing could hear him, he waved his hand enthusiastically and called out a greeting.

Zhou Yixing’s face twitched as he glared at Bai Xiaochun. Then he gritted his teeth and turned away, worried that if he kept looking at Bai Xiaochun, more bad luck might come his way....

After seeing Zhou Yixing look away, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and rubbed his nose, then looked around, feeling a bit bored.

“These people are taking forever! It’s just a trial by fire, right? Hurry up and finish!” Yawning, he looked back at the stone stele to see if he could figure out what was taking so long.

Chapter 553: Spirit Enhancement!

Any cultivator within one of the glowing spheres merely had to look in the direction of the text on the stone stele, and the words would appear in their minds. Although the descriptions of the trials by fire seemed simple, anyone who took 1st place in any of the trials listed on the stele would be named the overall 1st place winner!

It didn't matter which trial by fire it was, or when the cultivator started it. As long as they took 1st place, they would immediately be teleported to the third level of the labyrinth, which was the location of the deva soul!

However, the description wasn't clear about whether or not others might also be able to reach that third level. Based on the way the rules were described, it seemed possible that if the 1st place winner didn't acquire the deva soul quickly enough, then the 2nd and 3rd place winners of the trial by fire might also be teleported to the third level, and thus have a chance to acquire the deva soul.

There was also a point explaining how the further one proceeded in a trial by fire, the more brightly that person's glowing sphere would shine. From that, Bai Xiaochun could tell that Mistress Red-Dust was further along than anyone else. Likely, she would take 1st place and get the deva soul.

Bai Xiaochun felt a bit disappointed about that. After all, he wasn't absolutely set on winning another deva soul, but if he could do so without much trouble, he would be more than happy.

At this point, though, there didn't seem much hope. He had arrived too late, behind over a thousand others. Sighing, he looked closer at the stele to see the information about the various trials by fire.

The first was a trial regarding battle prowess.

“No way am I gonna do that one,” he murmured with the shake of his head. “All the fighting and killing doesn't suit me at all!” The second trial by fire caused his eyes to glitter. It was a trial of medicine concocting.

“Medicine concocting, huh? I'm pretty good at that!” Enthused, he proceeded down the list.

“Divine ability trial? Equipment forging trial? Divine soul trial? None of those will do. There's no way I could match up with Granny Red-Dust in divine abilities. I can't forge equipment, and I haven't even formed a divine soul yet, whatever that is. I guess medicine concocting is the best bet for me.” Bai Xiaochun was starting to get interested in the idea, especially considering how boring it was. With that, he continued to look at the rest of the trials.

“Supreme unity trial? Spirit enhancement trial? Intrepid body trial?” Bai Xiaochun had no idea what the supreme unity trial was about, so he dismissed it. As for the intrepid body trial, he had his speculations.

“Sounds like that's a test of fleshly body power. Definitely not for me. Too dangerous.” He continued to look down the stone stele, upon which were at least a hundred different trials by fire of all sorts. Many of them were tests of things Bai Xiaochun had never heard of, and eventually, his attention was drawn back to the trials of medicine concocting and spirit enhancement. However, he was still hesitating.

“It's too bad that time is so limited, otherwise I would pick the medicine concocting. But when it comes to spirit enhancement....” Bai Xiaochun's eyes narrowed a bit, glittering with a mischievous light as he realized that this was the perfect opportunity to cheat....

“If I can use my turtle-wok, then a spirit enhancement trial wouldn't be hard for me at all. Maybe I would still have a chance of

snatching 1st place away from Mistress Red-Dust!” The more he thought about it, the more excited he got.

“Yeah, might as well. I have no chance of catching up in medicine concocting, so I guess I should place my bet on spirit enhancement. If I win, I’ll get a deva soul, and if I lose, no harm done.” And thus, his decision was made. Focusing on the spirit enhancement trial, he followed the description on the stone stele, allowing his mind to sink into the words.

Rumbling sounds filled his mind, and everything around him began to spin. All of a sudden, he realized that his soul was leaving his body and flying toward the stone stele.

Shocked, he looked back to see himself sitting cross-legged in meditation in the glowing sphere. Because his soul was no longer in his body, the mask on his face stopped working, and slowly fell down onto his chest.

Bai Xiaochun was taken aback by this unexpected turn of events, and yet there was nothing he could do to change the situation. In the next moment, his soul slammed into the stone stele.

More rumbling sounds filled his mind, like the sound of thousands of ghosts screaming simultaneously, trying to shred his soul to pieces.

Thankfully, it didn’t last for long, only a few breaths worth of time. Then the sounds faded away, his blurred vision turned clear, and he found himself in a private chamber of some sort.

The walls were pitch black, and seemed oppressively sinister. The chamber was completely empty except for three stone daises, each one roughly waist-high. Atop the center dais was a withered yellow leaf that seemed completely ordinary in nature, and in fact, that was exactly what it was. It was a leaf so ordinary that it couldn’t have been more mundane.

Floating above the left-hand stone dais was a slowly-burning

tongue of red flame. The flame wasn't very hot, only a bit more than ordinary flame from the mortal world. However, Bai Xiaochun could instantly tell that it was no ordinary flame; it was the one-colored flame that was commonly seen in the cultivation world.

On the right-hand dais were some random materials such as rocks, vegetation, and metals, as well as some other things that Bai Xiaochun didn't recognize.

However, there was something familiar about them, and after a moment, he realized that they reminded him of some of the things he had seen Big Fatty Zhang use when performing spirit enhancements.

Other than the three stone daises, there was nothing else in the room. Clearly, this room was designed to be a spirit enhancement workshop, and the current task was to perform a onefold spirit enhancement.

Bai Xiaochun looked around, and took a moment to study the one-colored flame. Then he thought back to how the mask had fallen off his face outside, and started to get nervous. Finally, he gritted his teeth and said, "I'm probably fine. The glowing spheres are really tough, otherwise, the people who showed up first would have ended up getting killed. First things first, I need to see if I can summon my turtle-wok...." After all, he didn't have his bag of holding in this place, nor any of his other belongings. Therefore, he took a deep breath and then waved his finger like he usually did to summon the turtle-wok.

Instantly, a black light shot out, resolving into the shape of the turtle-wok!

Bai Xiaochun was taken aback, but quickly began to laugh proudly.

"It came in with me! Hahaha! I can't believe it actually came in with me!!" Eyes shining brightly, he thought about what it would

be like to take 1st place and get his hands on that deva soul.

“With my turtle-wok, who can possibly compete with me?!”

“Hmmphhh! When Bai Xiaochun wants to take 1st place, who dares to stand in his way!” Confidently swishing his sleeve, he stuck his chin up proudly. However, he knew that time was of the essence, so he quickly suppressed his excitement and walked up to take the one-colored flame. Then, he excitedly threw it into the turtle-wok.

In response, the turtle-wok trembled and soaked up the flame, and the designs on its surface began to shine brightly.

More confident than ever, Bai Xiaochun chuckled and then carefully picked up the withered leaf. After looking it over and confirming it was just an ordinary item, he muttered, “What a waste to enhance a leaf like this.” However, he felt fairly certain that, no matter what items he enhanced here, he would not be able to take them with him, so in the end, it didn’t really matter how the fuel was used. Therefore, he tossed the leaf into the turtle-wok.

Instantly, the turtle-wok’s designs flared with light that coalesced onto the leaf. A moment later, the blinding light faded away, and a single silver design could be seen on the surface of the leaf!

Bai Xiaochun quickly picked it up and looked at it. Other than the silver design, he couldn’t find anything else about it that was unusual.

“What a waste,” he thought, shaking his head. Looking over at the left-hand dais, he saw that another tongue of flame had appeared, this one with two colors. Of course, it was none other than two-colored flame.

“I guess it doesn’t matter. This is just a trial by fire, and none of this stuff belongs to me anyway. No skin off my back.” With that, he casually took the two-colored flame and started another spirit

enhancement.

Before long, the leaf had two silver designs on it. Then a third, a fourth, and so-on, until there were a total of eight. By this point, Bai Xiaochun was really bemoaning the whole situation.

“An eightfold spirit enhancement....” he murmured, looking at the leaf in his palm. It was still withered, but was clearly more durable and tough than before. It was even glowing a bit, and was obviously much more than an ordinary leaf. It was now some sort of treasure.

At this point he had another idea, considering that it had become a valuable treasure. If he could brand it to himself, then perhaps it would recognize him as its master, and then allow him to take it away with him when he left....

Hoping for the best, he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, sending his personal mark into the leaf, which glowed in response. It was a success!

Pleased, Bai Xiaochun took the nine-colored flame and began to perform another spirit enhancement....

Nine, ten....

Before long, there were a shocking ten silver designs on the surface of the leaf. Although it still looked withered, its fundamental nature had changed, and it now glowed with a bright light. Anyone who looked at it would take it to be jade or some other precious stone!

“Tenfold enhancement....” Bai Xiaochun murmured. Looking over at the stone dais, he watched as an eleven-colored flame took form, entrancing and eye-catching.

Most accurately speaking, the eleven-colored flame wasn't actually made up of eleven colors. However, Bai Xiaochun could tell just by looking at it that it was eleven-colored flame!

It was impossible to describe exactly how he knew it. Further,

there was something about how the fire was constantly changing that tugged at his soul with shocking power.

Thinking back to the golden design on the fire soul arrow, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered, and he thought, "In the past, I speculated about what miraculous transformations would occur with an elevenfold spirit enhancement...."

Chapter 554: Profoundly Mysterious!

When Bai Xiaochun's soul entered the trial by fire dimension inside of the stone stele, none of the other people participating in the trials could see.

However, Zhou Yixing still hadn't selected which trial by fire to enter. At one point, he got a strange feeling, and looked over to find that one of the glowing spheres off in the distance was growing brighter.

At that point, his jaw dropped as he realized that he was looking at Bai Xiaochun sitting there, his mask having fallen off of his face.

Bai Xiaochun's glowing sphere was much brighter than it was before, and from the look of it, appeared to already be among the 500 brightest spheres.

"So, it turns out he really is Bai Xiaochun! How could he be going so fast!? What trial by fire did he pick?!" Unconvinced that Bai Xiaochun could possibly be advancing so quickly, he took a deep breath and tore his gaze away, determined to focus solely on his own trial by fire.

Meanwhile, back in the private spirit enhancement workshop, the turtle-wok was absorbing the eleven-colored flame, and Bai Xiaochun was looking on in anticipation as the leaf began to shine brightly.

The light was far more dazzling than that from the previous ten enhancements, causing silver to flood the area. But then, as Bai Xiaochun looked on with wide eyes, the ten silver designs overlapped, transforming into a single golden design!

"So, it really does work that way!" At this point, Bai Xiaochun assumed the process was concluded. However, in a sudden, unexpected turn of events, the instant the golden design appeared, the leaf wriggled, and began to turn green!

After it was completely green, life force could be sensed inside of it, leaving Bai Xiaochun thunderstruck.

“How... how is this possible?!?!” he exclaimed. Even as he looked on, the leaf stalk began to grow out, turning into a branch that had even more leaves on it. Shockingly, even those leaves began to grow out into larger branches....

Bai Xiaochun forgot to breathe as he watched a small tree trunk form, and more branches spread out. As of this moment, the turtle-wok actually contained a small tree!!

The tree brimmed with life force, and seemed completely corporeal. A dazzling golden design could be seen on its surface. Furthermore, the incredible transformations had completely wiped away Bai Xiaochun’s own mark.

“With an elevenfold spirit enhancement, that one leaf turned into an entire tree!

“The elevenfold enhancement even erased my branding mark....

“And the silver design transformed into a golden one!” However, after looking more closely at the tree, Bai Xiaochun could tell that it wasn’t completely stable. Occasionally, it would blur, as though it existed somewhere in between the level of a leaf and a tree.

That was the same characteristic shared by the fire soul arrow.

Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken by the precious spirit enhancement he had performed. As of this moment, he had a much deeper understanding of how spirit enhancements worked. With that, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and pointed out, hoping that he could brand his mark onto the little tree to make it his own.

As soon as the mark settled onto the tree, Bai Xiaochun confirmed that even elevenfold spirit enhanced items could also be branded to a master.

“So,” he thought, gnawing his lip, “when a treasure receives an

elevenfold spirit enhancement, it transforms on a fundamental level. It doesn't matter who it belonged to before, anyone who leaves a branding mark on it will become its new master....” By this point, he had completely forgotten about his goal of taking 1st place in the trial by fire. All of his interest was focused on the spirit enhancements.

“The first ten enhancements left silver designs. Could it be that the next ten all leave golden designs? But what about after that? What kind of designs will appear then?” Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with unprecedented brightness as he looked over at the stone dais, upon which another flame was taking form. Without the slightest hesitation, he began to perform more spirit enhancements.

Twelfefold. Thirteenfold. Fourteenfold!

More golden designs appeared on the surface of the little tree, until there were four. At the same time, the tree grew more healthy and strong. The trunk became thicker, and more branches spread out, each of which was covered with numerous leaves. Also, a strong pressure began to radiate out from the tree.

When Bai Xiaochun sensed the increasingly powerful pressure coming from the tree, his excitement grew. By now, he was completely entranced with spirit enhancing, and kept his eyes glued to the tree as he grabbed the fifteen-colored flame and started another enhancement.

In the instant that the spirit enhancement was completed, the turtle-wok began to tremble in unprecedented fashion. This was a reaction Bai Xiaochun had never witnessed before; the golden light which shone out of the wok was so intense it was almost completely blinding.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun realized that a fifteenfold enhancement must be a point at which drastic transformations occurred.

“What transformation, though...?” Bai Xiaochun murmured,

gnawing excitedly on his lip. Soon, the golden design on the turtle-wok faded, and the tree grew bigger. At the same time, it began to pulse faintly with the power of a deva!!

“Deva!” Bai Xiaochun blurted, his expression one of complete incredulity. Although he hadn’t interacted with devas very many times, he had done so enough to recognize the fluctuations of the Deva Realm.

After looking carefully at the tree, he reached out to touch it, and when he did, he suddenly felt as if he were connected to the heavens.

“I can't believe that spirit enhancement is so profoundly mysterious!” Expression flickering, he took a few steps back. Then, seemingly entranced, he grabbed the next tongue of flame off of the stone dais and began another spirit enhancement

RUMBLE!

Sixteenfold. Seventeenfold. Eighteenfold. Nineteenfold.
Twentyfold....

He performed five spirit enhancements in a row, causing the tree to grow larger and larger. By now, it seemed to fill most of the workshop, and even seemed like it might break through the walls to continue its growth. Upon looking up, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t even see the top of the tree. Thankfully, there was still some room inside of the turtle-wok to continue performing spirit enhancements.

Ten golden designs covered the surface of the tree, dazzling and eye-catching. Furthermore, the deva power the tree radiated caused Bai Xiaochun to tremble physically.

To him, it almost felt like there was an actual deva standing in front of him, a deva far more powerful than either Chen Hetian or Mistress Red-Dust.

Apparently, this level of power was the peak of the Deva Realm!

It was like a brooding thunderstorm that, if it touched Bai Xiaochun, would kill him in body and soul, regardless of how powerful his fleshly body was. In fact, Bai Xiaochun was fairly certain that it was even strong enough to render Chen Hetian and Mistress Red-Dust completely powerless!

Even more exciting to Bai Xiaochun was the fact that the tree still had his mark on it. With a single thought and the wave of a finger, he could make it into a magical item of his own possession.

With a magical item like that, he was completely confident in being able to dominate Chen Hetian or Mistress Red-Dust.

“I... I created this treasure because of my turtle-wok. I wonder if there are any other precious treasures in the world that have twentyfold spirit enhancements?!?! ”

“If... if I can take this tree with me, then I’ve definitely struck gold! I... I could go back to the River-Defying Sect immediately!” However, his excitement quickly devolved into concern of what was at stake. Considering how powerful the tree was, he couldn’t imagine that he would actually be able to take it out of this place. Therefore, he reached out to the newest tongue of flame and put it into the turtle-wok.

“Twenty-onefold!”

Meanwhile, on the outside, Zhou Yixing felt his hair standing on end. Earlier, he had decided which trial by fire to select, and was just about to enter it, when Bai Xiaochun’s glowing sphere began to shine even more brightly.

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun’s sphere really was increasing in brightness far too quickly. Zhou Yixing’s eyes went wide as he watched it rapidly surpass almost all of the other glowing spheres in the area!!

All of the people in those spheres had arrived in this area before Bai Xiaochun, and yet now, didn’t measure up to him at all. He was

even catching up to Mistress Red-Dust, who had once been the clear leader!

Although he hadn't caught up yet, from the way the light of his sphere emanated boundless brightness, it didn't seem impossible for him to catch up to Mistress Red-Dust.

Zhou Yixing's eyes couldn't have been wider, and his mind was spinning. Convinced he must be seeing things, he rubbed his eyes, and yet, upon opening them, nothing had changed.

"How could this be happening?!?!" he muttered through angrily gritted teeth, his jealousy rising. "Dammit, don't tell me he's actually going to take 1st place?"

Chapter 555: The Pinnacle!

Twenty-onefold!

Rumbling sounds echoed about within the workshop, causing the walls to shake to the point where they were beginning to break apart. However, the three stone daises remained in place. As for Bai Xiaochun, he grabbed one of the tree branches for stability. As he did, the ten golden designs on the surface of the tree began to converge together.

Bai Xiaochun was panting, and forced himself not to blink as he waited to see what transformation would occur with a twenty-onefold spirit enhancement.

This was an opportunity for him to get a glimpse of the power of spirit enhancement that he would never be able to see on the outside.

Currently, the intense rumbling sounds weren't just affecting the area around the tree; the huge stone stele on the outside was also shaking.

The process lasted for about a dozen breaths' of time, whereupon Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide as the ten golden designs began to turn violet.

In the end, they became a single violet design!

When the violet design was complete, the tree didn't continue to grow larger. Instead, blinding violet light shone out, and a face suddenly became visible on its surface, as if it were turning into a living being.

There was something profoundly ancient about the face, and yet, when it opened its eyes, they shone like that of an infant as they looked around curiously.

The deva aura of the tree faded away, and was replaced with a pressure that was even more terrifying. Although the pressure

remained mostly inside of the tree, Bai Xiaochun was still able to sense it, and could tell that if it were unleashed, it could do mind-boggling things.

Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. Mind spinning, he cautiously checked to see if his branding mark was still on the tree.

When he saw that the mark was still there, unchanged by the twenty-onefold spirit enhancement, he sighed in relief.

"After the tenth enhancement, the leaf became a tree. After the twentieth, the tree became a spirit. A tree spirit? A plant spirit?"

Swallowing hard, and wiping the sweat from his brow, he looked at the tree and face, which still had a blank look in its eyes. Gritting his teeth, he said, "Whatever it is, my mark is still there. Considering the twenty-onefold enhancement is completely heaven-defying, I wonder what will happen after the thirtieth enhancement?" As Bai Xiaochun considered all these matters, his anticipation regarding a thirtyfold enhancement grew keener than ever.

Looking over at the stone pedestal, and the new flame, his eyes shone with madness as he began to perform more spirit enhancements.

Twenty-two!

With every spirit enhancement after the twentieth, heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling sounds rocked the area. The workshop had long since been destroyed, and as for the tree, it was trembling violently. At the same time, the light in its eyes grew more profound, and it even began to show signs of intelligence.

It was almost as if it were growing profoundly older with each passing moment.

Outside, the stone stele was shaking, almost as if it were unable to withstand the spirit enhancements that Bai Xiaochun was

performing!

And as for Bai Xiaochun's glowing sphere, it was so bright that it had long since outshone Mistress Red-Dust's, and was almost the only thing visible in the entire void!

By this point, Zhou Yixing was in complete despair, especially after he calculated how much time had passed.

"This Bai Xiaochun is completely inhuman! I hope I never meet him in person ever again!" What was happening was a huge blow to Zhou Yixing, and had him completely downhearted.

Bai Xiaochun's spirit enhancement session was causing the stone stele to shake so violently that many of the trial-takers in the surrounding glowing spheres found their trials interrupted. Apparently, the stone stele didn't have the power to sustain all of the trials by fire, and therefore, people soon began to regain consciousness.

At first, those who recovered looked around blankly, but soon cries of alarm began to ring out.

"What's going on!?"

"Hey, what am I doing out here? I wasn't finished with my trial by fire!"

"Heavens! Look at how badly the stone stele is shaking! What's happening? And whose sphere is glowing so brightly?!?!"

"Bai Xiaochun!!"

The stone stele was still shaking, but hadn't collapsed. Although more and more trial-takers were being ejected, Bai Xiaochun wasn't showing any signs of stopping in his mad burst of spirit enhancement.

Twenty-three!

When the three violet designs appeared, the stone stele began to shake even harder, and had no choice but to eject hundreds more

of the trial-takers. And yet, after a moment, even that wasn't enough, and soon everyone other than Mistress Red-Dust and Bai Xiaochun was interrupted!

It didn't matter how the other people were progressing in their trials by fire, they were all removed. Over a thousand people were now awake, and the buzz of conversation was louder than ever.

Of course, as all of the other trial-takers were interrupted, their glowing spheres went dark, until there were only two that glowed with blinding light. One belonged to Bai Xiaochun, and the other, to Mistress Red-Dust!

Bai Xiaochun's glowing sphere was completely radiant, with Mistress Red-Dust's being significantly less bright. And yet, hers was still bright enough to attract quite a bit of attention.

"It's Bai Xiaochun!"

"Heavens! Which trial did Devil Bai go into? Not even a deva can compare to him!!"

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's hair was in complete disarray, and he was shouting in excitement.

"Twenty-four!"

With the fourth violet design, even more intelligence gleamed in the tree's eyes, and it even looked down at Bai Xiaochun.

That was when a crack appeared on the stone stele outside, causing widespread astonishment among the onlookers.

And yet, things weren't over yet! Bai Xiaochun madly yelled, "Twenty-five!"

He couldn't even determine the color of the fire he had just thrown into the wok, but as soon as it entered, intense violet light streamed out, and a fifth violet design appeared on the tree.

At that point, the face on the tree let out a sigh that seemed to originate in the most ancient of times. The echoing sigh also

seemed to be filled with the evidence of countless other living beings, lives that were constantly multiplying. At the same time, the tree itself was evolving in a direction that seemed almost completely outrageous to Bai Xiaochun!

Unfortunately, it was still missing something to be complete, and what it was missing was more spirit enhancements!

“A world...? Don’t tell me that after the thirtieth spirit enhancement, this tree will become its own world?!” Bai Xiaochun’s mind spun with unprecedented enlightenment, and his body trembled. However, he still reached out to get the new fire from the stone dais. Sadly, the dais was incapable of producing a twenty-sixth flame, and instead, crumbled into dust....

In addition, the other two daises and the tree also crumbled away!

Bai Xiaochun felt like his mind was being struck by countless bolts of lightning. This trial by fire had been of incredible benefit to him, and was definitely unprecedented good fortune!

Not only had his own spirit enhancement abilities improved, but it was likely that he now knew more about spirit enhancement than almost anyone else in the lands of Heavenspan! It would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find someone as knowledgeable as him!

What left him most shaken of all was that he now realized how much he had overlooked spirit enhancement. Spirit enhancement could turn what was useless into something miraculous. Essentially, it was the greatest source of good fortune in the entire world!!

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding, and deep inside of him, he suddenly had a profound desire to focus on spirit enhancement, for much the same reason he had developed his desire to learn how to concoct medicine. Spirit enhancement could help him live forever!

“Live forever? It can even turn you into a world!!” From what he could tell, the path of spirit enhancement could possibly be a more direct route to his goal, and that was because of the turtle-wok!

“Just where exactly did my turtle-wok come from?!” The incredible spirit enhancement powers of the turtle-wok left Bai Xiaochun even more curious about its origins.

Even as he was shaken by all of these things, a voice echoed out that seemed to come from beyond the heavens.

“You have taken 1st place!” At the same time, a profound darkness spread out over the realm of the trials by fire, seemingly sealing it in place. As for Bai Xiaochun, before he could even react to anything, he found himself being sucked into a vortex.

Chapter 556: Third Level!

Outside of the stone stele, in the glowing sphere of light, Bai Xiaochun's eyes opened. A blank look could be seen in them, and before he could react, the glowing sphere became another vortex which sucked him inside. Then the vortex vanished.

At that point, the stone stele finally stopped shaking, although the crack on its surface remained.

Furthermore, the spirit enhancement trial vanished from among the list of available trials....

When the more than 1,000 spectators saw that, their jaws dropped, and their minds began to spin.

“Bai Xiaochun vanished!!”

“Did he really take 1st place!?!? That means he must have just gone to the third level to get the deva soul!!”

“How could it be him!?!? Damn that Devil Bai! Why did it have to be him!?!?”

“Hmph! Actually, it's good that he's getting the deva soul. If a deva won it, none of us would ever have a chance of taking it away. But there's no way Devil Bai will be able to keep his hands on it!”

“That's right. Now Bai Xiaochun is worth more than ever. Kill him, and not only will you get a full set of five elements deva beast souls, but you'll also get a deva soul!”

However, even as the discussion raged, people realized that Mistress Red-Dust's glowing sphere was still lit up, making it even more eye-catching than before. Not only had she not been ejected from the trial by fire, but she was apparently very close to completing it.

At that point, it became obvious that Bai Xiaochun might not be the one to get the deva soul. If he didn't move quickly enough in

the third level, then not only would he fail to get the deva soul, but he might also lose his life.

After all, he would be stuck alone with a deva who wanted him dead. As for how that scenario would end, few people even needed to wonder.

Zhou Yixing was trembling, his eyes shining with rabid excitement. “Go, Matriarch Red-Dust, go! Get to that third level and slaughter that damned Bai Xiaochun!”

In the third level of the labyrinth, which was the location of the deva soul, there was a huge, octagonal sepulcher. Not only were there brightly shining lamps illuminating the entire area, but there were also eight statues, one in each corner.

The statues were fully 300 meters tall, and yet, compared to the overall size of the sepulcher, seemed insignificant. The floor was made up of overlapping tiles that resembled dragon scales, and in fact, closer examination revealed an inlaid depiction of nine golden dragons!

All nine of those dragons were situated around an altar, as if that altar were their revered leader!

And that was only the floor! The walls of the sepulcher were covered with innumerable openings, from which erupted beams of multicolored light, which swirled together in midair to form the shape of an enormous golden dragon!

It was extremely lifelike, as though it were real and corporeal, coiled about on the ceiling, with its head resting just above the altar, its eyes closed as if sleeping.

The way that everything in the sepulcher seemed to point to the altar truly made it stand out. As for the altar, there was no coffin on top of it, only a green stone stele!

It seemed ancient, as if it had existed for countless years, and was covered with lines of script that had obviously been left behind for

later generations to read.

However, anyone who got close enough would instantly realize that the stone stele was actually floating above the surface of the altar!

There was some mysterious power holding the stone stele up, and ensuring that it floated there completely unmoving. Furthermore, floating in the space between the stone stele and the surface of the altar was a blue and white jade bracelet!

Within the jade bracelet was a wisp of green mist that was apparently a distillation of the quintessence of heaven and earth. Occasionally, the swirling mist would form together into a drop of water, which would emanate the soul fluctuations of the Deva Realm!!

This was the deva soul, and a water-type deva soul at that!

Currently, golden light was flickering above the golden floor roughly 3,000 meters to the right of the altar, which was where Bai Xiaochun was materializing.

At first, Bai Xiaochun looked confused, which was no wonder considering how many teleportations he'd just gone through. He had been completely focused on spirit enhancement, only to have his soul whisked back into the glowing sphere. Then, just when he had opened his eyes, he was taken to this place.

He looked around blankly for a moment, then noticed the golden dragon's head above the altar. At that point, his eyes went wide, and he gasped and took a few steps back. Then he looked around at all the holes in the wall which were projecting the light that formed the dragon.

“Oh, I thought it was a real dragon, but turns out it's fake. Trying to scare Lord Bai, huh?” Even as he breathed a sigh of relief, his thoughts began to clear, and as he recalled everything which had just occurred, he realized that he must be in the third level!

“I took 1st place!” Eyes shining with excitement at the thought of how much he was benefiting from all of this, he looked around and then prepared to fly toward the altar. However, that was when his face suddenly fell.

“My wok....” Unsure of whether or not he had left his wok behind during the sudden teleportation, he quickly attempted to summon it. Thankfully, the black light appeared, and the wok popped out. Sighing in relief, he put it away. Then he remembered his mask, and looked down to find it stuck to his chest. After putting it away into his bag of holding, he hurried toward the altar.

After looking up at the shining dragon, he reached out to see if he could touch it, only to find that his hand passed through it. Finally, he relaxed a bit.

“This place is decorated very nicely. It has a glowing dragon in the air, and even the floor is made of dragons. You know, it actually reminds me of a tomb, except that there isn’t a coffin.” By this point, he was standing right in front of the stone stele, and could see that right beneath it was a white and blue jade bracelet, filled with mist!

Many people would never even have the chance to see a single deva soul in their entire life, and would thus have difficulty identifying one. But Bai Xiaochun already had two in his bag of holding, and therefore, he instantly realized that the mist in the bracelet was a deva soul!

Clearly, the deva soul was being suppressed by the power of the stone stele, which would also make it difficult to take it away. Looking up at the stone stele, Bai Xiaochun began to read the script, whereupon his eyes widened, and he subconsciously took a few steps back, his eyes shining with disbelief.

I am the second generation arch-emperor, and this is one of nine of my sepulchers that do not contain my fleshly remains. My

cultivation base came from my father, the emperor before me. In accord with his wishes, upon my death, I did not hesitate to split apart my three spiritual souls and seven physical souls, and send them into the sepulchers for my descendants to acquire as good fortune.

All people in this world are of my blood, and thus, any who reach this point will be one of my descendants....

Located here is my seventh physical soul, which is also a deva soul....

Bai Xiaochun was shaken by what he read, and could only speculate at what further secrets were hidden in this place....

Panting, he continued to read the script, which left him even more shocked, as it described how to use deva souls.

After he finished reading all the text, Bai Xiaochun was shocked to find that, before, he had been completely unaware of how to properly use deva souls. Before, he had been under the impression that all you had to do was collect five deva souls and put them together in much the same way that you would put together a set of five elements deva beast souls, then absorb them internally. At that point, you could break out of Core Formation and step into the Nascent Soul stage!

The truth was that there was much more to it than that!

It was true that five deva souls were needed to reach the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage. However, it wasn't necessary to wait until collecting a set of five before beginning to absorb them! Each deva soul could be absorbed individually, and then used to produce a clone with exactly the same cultivation base as one's true self!!!

This was Bai Xiaochun's first time hearing about such a thing. Perhaps no one had ever told him because... no one else knew about this either! This bit of information was something which had been erased by the passage of countless years of time!

If one could absorb five different deva souls of different types, not only would the five clones give one indescribable battle prowess, but all one had to do was fuse the clones with one's true self, and then use that incredible power to instantly reach the Nascent Soul stage without any chance of failure!

From the process of reaching the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, it was possible to see how incredibly powerful it was.

Of course, there was a downside. Upon absorbing even a single deva soul, it became impossible to ever again attempt to use deva beast souls to form a Nascent Soul! Once one started down the path of the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, one could never go back.

Chapter 557: Deva Soul In Hand!

Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding from the fact that, if he counted this deva soul right in front of him, he now had three in his collection. Furthermore, all of them were different types of souls. Deva souls were very rare to begin with, and was impossible to say if or when he would be able to find two more of different types. After a bit of thought, he sighed.

“Forget it. Going with deva beast souls is definitely the safest bet.” Although he was a bit disappointed that there was basically no way for him to reach the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, he was fairly certain that no one outside of this sepulcher was aware of the other usages of deva souls. That was a bit of information that he might be able to profit from later.

With such thoughts on his mind, he reached out to see if he could erase the script from the stone stele. That way, if someone else ever came along, Bai Xiaochun would still remain the only person privy to the secrets he had just learned.

To his delight, a quick test proved that the words on the stone stele had been there for so long that it took almost no effort on his part to wipe some of them away. Just when he was preparing to erase the entire body of text, he suddenly saw one line off to the side that he hadn't noticed before.

I have intentionally left these words behind, and thus, anyone who defaces them shall be cursed....

“Cursed!?!?” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed, his eyes going wide and his hair standing on end. He pulled his hand away from the stone stele as if it were a hot iron. “How sinister, this second generation arch-emperor! Why did he have to make the warning so small you can't see it unless you stick your nose right up to the stele?! If he didn't want people to erase the text, he should have used some magic to make sure people couldn't.” Gritting his teeth, he decided he

couldn't take any more risks. The idea of a curse left him completely jumpy, and looking around in fear.

"I only erased a few words, that's all. Plus it wasn't on purpose. Shouldn't be a problem...." Following the method described in the text he had just erased, he carefully performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waved his finger at the stone stele.

Instantly, the stele began to vibrate, and then move backward, freeing the light blue bracelet. Even as it began to fly into the air, Bai Xiaochun reached out and grabbed it!

"Deva soul in hand!"

In the moment that Bai Xiaochun grabbed the bracelet, something happened in the realm of trials by fire in the second level. Mistress Red-Dust's eyes snapped open.

Instantly, her glowing sphere became a vortex which sucked her away, and the crowd broke out into a huge commotion.

"Matriarch Red-Dust just disappeared!"

"She finished her trial by fire! She's being teleported to the deva soul!"

"What a pity. Now none of us have any hope of getting the deva soul."

Zhou Yixing couldn't have looked more excited, and started laughing loudly. "This time, you're definitely dead, Bai Xiaochun! Maybe I can't handle you, but I refuse to believe that you'll have any other choice than to flee from Matriarch Red-Dust and her deva cultivation base!"

At the same time, another loud cracking sound rang out from the huge stone stele, as the fissure which had opened up because of Bai Xiaochun's spirit enhancement activities widened. In fact, seven or eight smaller fissures spread out from the main one.

At the same time, enormous, thundering rumbling sounds began to ring out into the void, almost as if some invisible giant were striking the stele.

Everything began to shake, and a sensation of imminent collapse filled the entire area. Everyone present looked around in shock and fear.

“What’s going on!?”

“Is this place gonna collapse or something?!”

“Let’s get out of here! We’re underground! If the place collapses, we’ll be buried alive!!”

The cultivators in the glowing spheres were getting very nervous. As the stone stele began to crack, the glowing spheres started to twist and distort, and some of them even began to crack just like the stone stele. Some of the cultivators managed to blast open the spheres and fly out from inside.

Although none of them knew why the imminent collapse was occurring, it seemed likely to them that someone had triggered the destruction of the labyrinth, which meant that they were in danger of being killed.

There was little time for contemplation. After breaking free from the glowing spheres, people began to speed here and there in an attempt to find an exit.

Zhou Yixing also broke free and began to join the search. However, the more than 1,000 people quickly discovered that, to their despair, there were no exits!

Chen Hetian was among them. Eyes shining brightly, he flew high up in an attempt to use his deva cultivation base to break free.

Booms rang out, and the area where Chen Hetian had attacked rippled and distorted. However, the depression he had formed with his attack quickly restored itself, and the signs of imminent self-destruction did not lessen. If anything, they grew more

pronounced. Destructive bubbles even began to appear, which would instantly shred any cultivator too slow to avoid them to pieces.

Chen Hetian's face fell at the realization that not even he with his incredible battle prowess could break the barriers leading out of this place. Without any hesitation, he called out in a booming voice, "Listen up everyone. I don't care if you're from the Great Wall or the Wildlands, join me in attacking the barrier. Let's get out of here!"

Everyone knew that time was limited, and therefore, regardless of which side of the war they came from, they all joined forces under Chen Hetian, unleashing divine abilities and magical attacks to try to break out. As they did, the bulge created in the barrier grew more pronounced....

As the realm of trials by fire shook, drastic events were playing out in the rest of the labyrinth. The previously indestructible walls were now cracking and crumbling. Countless faces appeared on them, screaming as they attempted to flee, and yet, they were incapable of doing so.

The labyrinth as a whole was rocking as violently as if it were being held in someone's hand, and shook back and forth. The cultivators who were still searching for exits within the main part of the labyrinth were completely shaken, and it was all they could do just to stay on their feet.

Everyone could tell that a major crisis was developing, and that the entire area was about to collapse.

"How could this be happening?!"

"Dammit, I still haven't found the exit. Don't tell me I'm going to die in here!" Bitter howls of grief and anger filled every corner of the labyrinth.

Master God-Diviner was still making his way through the tunnels

when he saw, to his despair, that the walls were falling apart around him. He even saw a whole group of red hats flying through the air, screaming.

“It’s all over. I’m finished....” he moaned. In another area not too far from the realm of trials by fire, Song Que was laughing bitterly as the labyrinth fell apart around him. He could tell that the exit was just up ahead, and yet, before he could reach it, drastic upheaval struck.

“Could it be that I, Song Que, will end up buried in this labyrinth?!?!” Unwilling to give in, and yet bereft of any other options, he threw his head back and roared bitterly.

Dramatic events were unfolding outside of the labyrinth as well.

There were many people gathered outside. Bai Lin and two of the other generals had summoned large armies to camp outside the entrance. There were large groups of Wildlanders on the other side of the entrance, with hundreds of thousands of savages and soul cultivators, as well as quite a few necromancers.

Both sides were waiting to find out who would get the deva soul, and in order to prevent a large-scale conflict from breaking out, had encamped in the area.

However, before anyone could even emerge from the labyrinth, intense rumbling sounds began to echo out. Shocked expressions could be seen on the faces of Bai Lin and the generals, as well as the Wildlander necromancers. As of this moment, the entire area for 500 kilometers around the labyrinth was shining with bright light.

At the same time, the land was beginning to cave in, causing a mushroom cloud of dust to rise high into the sky.

The effects only continued to spread. Mountains collapsed, and the lands quaked as surely as if earth dragons were thrashing about beneath its surface.

Everyone began to back away nervously from the expanding area

of collapse.

“Something’s happening!” Bai Lin’s heart was pounding, and he considered going to investigate. However, as the lands collapsed, an aura erupted out that destabilized the souls of everyone present. It seemed obvious that anyone who got too close would get sucked into the destruction.

Clearly, the area of collapse was transforming into a huge spell formation, the size of which only continued to grow larger!

Chapter 558: Big sis Red-Dust, Let Me Explain

“What’s going on in there!?!?” On the Wildlands side, the high-ranking necromancers were all shocked, and began to edge backward nervously.

Compared to the pressure radiating out from the area of collapse, the cultivators in the area were like bugs!

Meanwhile, as everyone outside looked on anxiously, the third level where Bai Xiaochun stood was also collapsing!

Apparently, the sepulcher itself was the reason why the entire labyrinth was collapsing; the instant Bai Xiaochun grabbed the bracelet, everything began to shake violently. Even the statues were starting to fall apart.

The head of one of the statues fell off, slamming into the ground and causing a spiderweb of cracks to spread out.

It was the same with the walls, and even the altar seemed to be crumbling. The golden light dragon was distorting, and slabs of stone were falling down from the dome-like roof up above, causing booms to ring out when the pieces hit the ground.

At the same time, dust rose up everywhere, making it difficult to see.

Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered; all of these sudden developments had come completely without warning, leaving him totally unprepared. Just when he was about to start backing up from the altar...

In an area to the left of the altar, near one of the corners of the sepulcher, the light of teleportation glimmered, and a red, shadowy figure emerged.

Moments later, the nearest statue began to fall over, causing the

shadowy figure to flick a sleeve and reduce the statue to rubble. As the dust flew about, the shadowy figure began to speed in the direction of Bai Xiaochun and the altar.

Bai Xiaochun immediately recognized who it was that had teleported into the room. “Mistress Red-Dust!”

Mistress Red-Dust’s expression was grim, and her eyes burned with anger. Just as Bai Xiaochun before, she was a bit disoriented. She had just finished her trial by fire, and then been teleported to this place to find everything collapsing. Although she wasn’t sure of exactly what was happening, when she saw Bai Xiaochun and the bracelet he was about to put into his bag of holding, she knew it was the deva soul. At that point, everything clicked.

She had not taken 1st place, Bai Xiaochun had. And he had reached the deva soul before her!

“How impudent!” she yelled. “You don’t even qualify to speak the name Mistress Red-Dust! How dare you steal the treasure of the sepulcher, Bai Xiaochun. Do you have a death wish or something?!?” Her eyes burned with killing intent, and when her piercing voice stabbed into Bai Xiaochun’s ears, it felt like a sword was ripping into his brain.

He staggered backward as if he had been struck with a hammer, blood oozing out of the corners of his mouth. He suddenly felt frigid qi boring into him, causing his spine to arch. Shivering, and pupils constricting, he realized in that moment that he was only moments away from dying!

“I’m finished. Kaput!” He knew exactly how much the Wildlanders hated him, and remembered Mistress Red-Dust herself proclaiming a bounty on his head right outside the Great Wall. The way she was looking at him now, it almost seemed like she wanted to eat him alive.

In that moment of deadly crisis, his mind spun to come up with an idea. That idea came almost instantly, and without hesitation,

he reached out with his right hand to wipe some of the text off of the stone stele!

His goal was to wipe away the text about the curse, but from what Mistress Red-Dust could tell, he was urgently trying to wipe away all of the words.

Her eyes widened, and she waved her hand, sending a gust of wind out to slam into him.

“Big Sis Red-Dust... let me explain!!” However, blood sprayed out of his mouth as he tumbled away from the stone stele. However, because he had been so close, he still managed to wipe away that one line of text....

It seemed obvious that he was trying to win her favor, which was really the only option he had at the moment....

In almost the same moment that Bai Xiaochun flew away from the altar, Mistress Red-Dust’s blow landed, and the altar was blasted into bits, leaving the stele hovering there alone.

Some of the flying rubble hit Bai Xiaochun, causing more blood to spray out of his mouth.

“She’s trying to kill me!!” Bai Xiaochun trembled as he fled, unable to stop thinking about the fact that he was essentially stuck in a small room with Mistress Red-Dust. She was like a raging, explosive dragon, and he was like a tiny bunny rabbit. There was no way she would calm down, and if she hit him with a deadly blow, he would be killed instantly....

He already regretted taking the deva soul, and regretted everything he had done in the trial of spirit enhancement. How could he have known that he would take 1st place?

“Let’s just hope that Mistress Red-Dust’s curiosity gets the better of her, and that she picks up on the fact that I was going to erase the script on the text, then finishes the job....” Over and over again, he prayed inwardly for that very thing to happen.

“I really didn’t take 1st place on purpose!” he called out in a quavering voice. “Big Sis Red-Dust, you have to believe me....” Even as the altar was destroyed, and cracks spread out into the floating stone stele, Mistress Red-Dust appeared in front of it. As she began to read what was left of the text, her eyes went wide, and she seemed to forget about drawing on the power of her cultivation base.

Seeing that Mistress Red-Dust had been distracted by the stone stele, Bai Xiaochun urgently began to speed around, looking for an exit. However, even as the sepulcher collapsed around him, no exit was there to be found.

“Dammit. Where’s the exit!! There’s got to be one around here somewhere! If the second generation arch-emperor went to the trouble of giving someone a deva soul, he had to provide a way out too. Otherwise what would be the point!?” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were completely bloodshot. Finally, he let out a shout and used his Undying Hex!

The power of the Undying Hex could pierce through both spell formations and land alike, and although it hadn’t worked in the labyrinth, considering that everything was collapsing, he had to give it a shot here.

And yet, just as he was about to take a step, Mistress Red-Dust let out a cold snort, looked over at him, and waved her hand.

“Trying to run?!” she growled. Incredible power filled the sepulcher, sealing the entire place down and locking Bai Xiaochun in place.

It felt like a mountain was crushing down on him; his bones creaked and cracked, and he coughed up a massive mouthful of blood as the Undying Hex was interrupted.

Thankfully, he had a tough fleshly body. Before anything else could happen, he tossed out a heap of spirit enhanced magical items. There were dozens, some of them with threefold spirit

enhancements, some with sixfold enhancements. All at once, he detonated them, creating a huge blast that pushed away the forces crushing against him. Without any hesitation, he fell back, moving away from that area as quickly as possible, feeling like he had just stepped away from the gates of hell.

“Big Sis Red-Dust,” he cried, “Just take the deva soul, alright? Why don’t we just talk things--”

Mistress Red-Dust turned to look at him. At the moment, there was no time for protracted consideration. She knew that Bai Xiaochun had wiped away some of the words on the stone stele, which would make it very difficult to completely understand the rest of the contents.

That was especially so concerning she had seen the extra information about how to use deva souls, which was something even she had never heard of. Clearly, that was information that could not be left behind for others to read. Without another moment of hesitation, she waved her hand, shattering the stone stele and destroying any words which remained upon it.

“Too late,” she said coolly. Then, she burst into motion, heading directly toward Bai Xiaochun. As of this moment, she had three reasons to kill him. One was the deva soul. The second was to prevent him from spreading word about the information on the stone stele. And the third was because she hated him. Therefore, it was without the slightest hesitation that she unleashed a deadly attack.

Chapter 559: Beaten But Not To Death

In the same moment that Mistress Red-Dust destroyed the stone stele, it activated some unseen restrictive spell. The slowly-fading golden light dragon suddenly opened its eyes, causing all of the light shooting out of the holes in the walls to suddenly change direction and sweep through the crumbling sepulcher.

The golden dragon vanished, and in the blink of an eye, the entire sepulcher was filled with dazzling, colorful shafts of light. Most of them landed on Mistress Red-Dust, causing her face to fall.

The light possessed some corrosive power that instantly dissolved Mistress Red-Dust's clothing, revealing her milky white skin. Then, glowing red dots appeared on her that began to eat down into her skin, a corrosive attack that required cultivation base power to fight against. Magical items were useless against it, and therefore, Mistress Red-Dust waved her hand in an attempt to destroy the light-emitting holes. However, nothing worked, and she was forced to simply try to evade the touch of the light.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked by all of this, but was in no mood to ogle Mistress Red-Dust's lithe body. Some of the light flying around the room landed on him as well, although the effects seemed rather mild....

"The curse. It's the curse.... I wiped away a line of text, but Mistress Red-Dust is far guiltier! Hah, the arch-emperor is a smart one after all!" Bai Xiaochun was feeling very proud of himself, and yet, before he had much time to gloat, a red mist sprang up around Mistress Red-Dust, she threw another set of clothing on, and then began to speed in his direction.

The mist was rapidly being whittled away by the shooting light, and yet, Mistress Red-Dust seemed to think she had plenty of time to kill Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened, and he let out a yelp of fright.

“Your curse isn’t working, second generation arch-emperor....” With that, he shot forward with another burst of speed, becoming a series of afterimages as he fled from Mistress Red-Dust.

However, Mistress Red-Dust was a deva, and even a casual effort on her part was something that a person like Bai Xiaochun, in the great circle of the Gold Core stage, would be powerless to fight against.

A boom rang out, and blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun’s mouth. Despair filled his eyes; if he couldn’t find the exit, he would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt!

“You’re too slow.” Mistress Red-Dust said coldly. She took a step forward that seemed to simultaneously stretch and shrink the space around her. Clearly, she was about to place herself right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s hair stood on end as he backed up, letting out another shriek. However, it was in that moment that the sepulcher began to sway back and forth even more dramatically than before. Virtually all the statues along the walls were now falling to pieces.

Furthermore, a burst of teleportation power suddenly appeared. Clearly... a teleportation spell formation was activating!

Its effects weren’t limited to the sepulcher. In the realm of trials by fire, as well as in the tunnels of the labyrinth, teleportation power began to build up. Obviously, the teleportation was only moments away.

When that happened, everyone inside would be teleported away....

As of this moment... the exit was opening!!

To everyone else, the chance to leave meant a chance to survive. But that wasn’t the case for Bai Xiaochun. Considering how Mistress Red-Dust was attacking him, he wouldn’t be able to hold out until the teleportation formation activated!

However, the teleportation power interfered with Mistress Red-Dust's technique, leaving her in exactly the same place she had been in moments ago. Aware that a teleportation was imminent, her eyes flashed with determination as she began to stride toward Bai Xiaochun.

The shafts of light didn't seem to be hurting her very much at this point, and although the red dots on her skin were painful, she was able to suppress their effects with her cultivation base. Having no other options available, she summoned another cloud of red mist, and then attacked Bai Xiaochun again.

Bai Xiaochun was like a trapped animal. In the moment he had in which Mistress Red-Dust was delayed, he quickly pulled out a Godly Vestige Pill and popped it into his mouth, then continued to fall back. However, all Mistress Red-Dust had to do was take a single step, and his speed was useless. In the blink of an eye, she was right in front of him, whereupon she waved her right index finger in his direction.

Although she moved her finger casually through the air, it contained wildly destructive power. A sense of profound deadly crisis immediately caused Bai Xiaochun's bloodshot eyes to go wide. Considering he had no options left, he decided to throw caution to the wind and simply attack her with everything he had!

Bai Xiaochun knew that his only chance now was to buy some time for the teleportation spell formation to finish activating.

"Let's finish this!" he roared, unleashing all of the potential of his Undying Live Forever Technique. Utilizing his Undying Gold Skin, Undying Heavenly King, and Undying Tendons, he reached out toward Mistress Red-Dust and pinched his fingers together!

It was none other than the Throat Crushing Grasp!

But then, a boom echoed out, along with a scream from Bai Xiaochun, as Mistress Red-Dust simply grabbed his hand! With a slight gleam of disdain in her eye, she tossed him to the side.

Cracking sounds could be heard as his fingers were broken, and a massive force sent him flying away. Thankfully, his cultivation base and Undying Live Forever Technique made him extremely tough. Despite not being killed, he slammed over and over again into the ground, bones shattering and blood spurting out everywhere! His Undying Live Forever Technique had been completely routed!

It took only the shortest of moments for Bai Xiaochun to be severely injured.

Chuckling coldly, Mistress Red-Dust said, “Aren’t we the tough one? Got anything else left in you?”

Then she flickered into motion to eradicate the last bit of Bai Xiaochun’s life force. Bai Xiaochun could tell how badly he had been injured, and could sense that the flame of his life force was on the verge of being extinguished. Groaning, he stuffed his mouth full of Godly Vestige Pills, but swallowed only one of them.

Waves of heat washed through him, repairing his body with incredible speed. However, that was all the time it took Mistress Red-Dust to reach him.

Eyes bloodshot, he released the power of his cultivation base, causing frigid qi to shoot out with reckless abandon. He even drew upon his spiritual power, not holding back even the smallest bit. In the blink of an eye, the entire sepulcher filled with cracking sounds as it froze into a world of ice.

There was no time for thought or planning. Bai Xiaochun immediately turned and fled.

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it took place in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Mistress Red-Dust’s eyes flickered with scorn; she could tell that Bai Xiaochun was trying to buy time, and yet, was still confident that even still, she would be able to crush him to death.

As the frigid qi bore down on her, she waved her hand, causing it to crumble and disperse. Then she reached out with her finger, piercing through the air to appear right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

She was planning to end Bai Xiaochun's life in that moment, but before she could, the shafts of light destroyed her red mist, forcing her to summon it again. Before she could, the red dots on her skin corroded her even further, forcing her to combat the effects with her cultivation base. Because of all of those distractions, she could only spare thirty to forty percent of her power to attack Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was spattered with blood, but could do nothing to dodge or evade her. Howling with rage, he resorted to the Mountain Shaking Bash!

A boom rang out, along with a miserable howl as Bai Xiaochun was flung off to the side again, where he slammed into the crumbling wall. Virtually all of the bones in his body were broken, and the flame of his life force was once again pushed to the edge of being extinguished. However, almost no time passed before he bit down onto one of the Godly Vestige Pills he'd put into his mouth earlier. Warmth spread through him again, healing him almost instantly.

Even as Mistress Red-Dust closed in on him again, he danced to the side in lively fashion, causing her brow to furrow. Snorting coldly, she momentarily stopped worrying about the dots on her skin or the red mist, and unleashing a mighty blow onto Bai Xiaochun.

"I refuse to believe that you can recover from a true killing blow!"

The massive image of an illusory hand closed in on Bai Xiaochun, causing the air to twist and distort and releasing explosive energy in all directions.

"Lord Bai isn't the kind of guy you can just kill whenever you want, Granny Red-Dust!" Even as the huge hand bore down on

him, Bai Xiaochun whipped out his Eternal Parasol. Nine silver designs shone on its surface as he snapped it open. Then, the bizarre face appeared.

Chapter 560: What Was That Thing!

In the same moment that he produced the Eternal Parasol, he also pulled out countless paper talismans, which he plastered all over himself. At the moment, his mind was empty of anything other than thinking of ways to buy time.

When Mistress Red-Dust's palm attack hit the Eternal Parasol, a massive boom filled the air. Cracking sounds could be heard, as if the Eternal Parasol couldn't sustain the force. Fissures appeared on its surface, and the ghost face twisted as if in agony.

The parasol was then ripped out of Bai Xiaochun's hand and sent tumbling to the side. There was no time for him to think about retrieving it as he was sent flying backward, blood spraying out of his mouth. The shield layers created by his paper talismans were so thick that they almost didn't fit inside of the sepulcher, and when Mistress Red-Dust's palm slammed into them, the result was astonishing.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

One by one, the paper talismans were destroyed, and the shield layers fell apart. However, Mistress Red-Dust's palm attack also began to fade. Within the space of a few breaths of time, both the shields and the talismans were spent, and Bai Xiaochun was still falling back, the power of a Godly Vestige Pill sweeping through him and healing him.

Although this exchange seemed relatively simple, if Bai Lin had been there to see it, his heart would have twinged with pain. It was as if Bai Xiaochun had just defended himself with a big stack of money!

Bai Xiaochun's face was as pale as a sheet of paper. Even as he backed away from Mistress Red-Dust, and did everything he could to buy time, he continued to pepper her with insults.

“Hey Harlot Red-Dust, do you see now how hard it is to kill Lord Bai? You just wait until I become a demigod, then I’ll come for revenge!”

“Dammit!!” Mistress Red-Dust cursed angrily. She had already attacked multiple times, and had not been able to kill Bai Xiaochun. Furthermore, the teleportation power in the area was building up to a peak. Eyes flashing with the desire to kill, she sent red mist swirling around to form a tempest that began to block up the holes in the walls of the sepulcher!!

Although the mist was rapidly corroded, it gave Mistress Red-Dust the few breaths of time free from the shafts of light that she needed to build up the full power of her cultivation base. Then, she prepared to unleash a blow that she was sure would kill Bai Xiaochun!

She had long since noticed that the shafts of light didn’t affect Bai Xiaochun, and yet were extremely bothersome and dangerous to her. Obviously, she had fallen into a trap laid by Bai Xiaochun, all of which centered around the script on the stone stele.

After blocking the holes on the walls, Mistress Red-Dust’s eyes glittered, and she took a step toward Bai Xiaochun.

As her foot fell, the air around her sunk in, creating something that looked like a huge, sinister mouth. Then, a powerful gravitational force sprang out, grabbing onto Bai Xiaochun and dragging him toward the mouth.

Bai Xiaochun was scared out of his mind, and quickly performed an incantation gesture with both hands. Then he waved his finger toward the mouth and shouted, “Waterswamp!”

Suddenly, the entire sepulcher twisted and distorted as water vapor roiled out everywhere, turning the entire area into a watery swamp!

Next, a terrifying aura erupted out, something that seemed to

come from primordial times. Time and space both seemed affected, as if the entire area within that swamp now existed in ancient times!

Mistress Red-Dust's pupils constricted.

Before she could do anything, though, Bai Xiaochun shouted, "Kingdom!"

Instantly, five mountain-like spikes began to rise up from within the watery swamp, shooting straight toward Mistress Red-Dust.

However, Bai Xiaochun didn't even pause for a moment. Leaping into the air, he roared, "Living Mountain Incantation!"

After directly transforming into a 30-meter-tall stone golem, he joined the Waterswamp Kingdom spikes in a merciless attack on Mistress Red-Dust.

In response to the Waterswamp Kingdom, Mistress Red-Dust's eyes shone with a curious light. And yet, a moment later she chuckled coldly.

"A very mysterious magical technique. I'm not sure which sect you come from to have a divine spirit beast guardian like that. It's too bad... that you can't fully summon it. And even if you could, I wouldn't give you the time to do so. First, I'm going to kill this creature, then I'm going to kill you!" Even as the words left her mouth, Mistress Red-Dust performed an incantation gesture and sent red mist roiling out from her palm. In the briefest of moments, it transformed into a long red spear that she thrust, not toward the incoming spikes, but toward the ground where the actual watery swamp was located.

The red spear stabbed down toward the space below, piercing into whatever world lay beneath, and the creature inside, the creature which even Bai Xiaochun had never seen.

Subsequently, a roar of rage echoed out from below, causing Mistress Red-Dust's spear to shatter. Even the sinister mouth she

had formed with her magical technique collapsed. At the same time, the five mountain-like spikes continued to shoot up from below!!

The were not straight, but rather curved, and if one looked at them for more than a moment, one would be struck by how they resembled the claws of some beast. However, they were so enormous that those mere claws were like mountains. Furthermore, the creature appeared to be enraged by Mistress Red-Dust, and was trying to get out of the watery swamp to reach her....

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base wasn't strong enough to support the Waterswamp Kingdom. As the clawed hand stretched out, blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he let out a shriek as he felt his cultivation base and life force being ripped at violently. Clearly, the power required to fully allow the clawed hand to appear in the open was enough to completely wither him to death.... Terrified, he had no choice but to dispel his own magical technique, and dissipate the power of the Waterswamp Kingdom....

Mistress Red-Dust's expression flickered into one of shock as she staggered backward. "What was that thing!?!?"

Bai Xiaochun's face was just as ashen as Mistress Red-Dust's. He knew that his Waterswamp Kingdom was powerful, but had never realized it was this powerful. The claws on one of the creature's hands had been enough to nearly kill him. As he contemplated the fact that if he wasn't careful using the Waterswamp Kingdom, he could get himself killed, he shivered....

Even more depressing was how fanatically crazy Mistress Red-Dust was acting. What was the deal with that? All she had to do was follow through with his plan and attack the mountain-like spikes, whereupon he could have blocked her path and even used his Living Mountain Incantation.

Instead, the Waterswamp Kingdom was now gone, and he was stuck out in the open in his stone golem form. The only upside was that by this point, the holes in the wall had destroyed the red mist, and the shafts of light were now shooting toward Mistress Red-Dust.

Bai Xiaochun knew that time was running out for him. Therefore, he let out a shout and sped toward Mistress Red-Dust like a meteor!

Just as Mistress Red-Dust was recovering from her shock at the enormous creature she had just had a brush with, the shafts of light returned. Anger immediately burned in her heart; were it not for those shafts of light, she would never have had so much difficulty killing Bai Xiaochun!

However, the shafts of light, and the red welts they left on her skin, caused intense pain, and required significant effort to suppress. Furthermore, the slightest lapse of attention on her part could lead to permanent consequences.

Bai Xiaochun was turning out to be incredibly resilient. Plus, he had all sorts of random items and techniques to keep him going. Finally, Mistress Red-Dust barked out a cold laugh, and then glared at Bai Xiaochun with more killing intent than ever.

“You’re running out of time!” Taking a deep breath, she yet again ignored the red welts and abandoned the use of the red mist to defend herself. Performing an incantation gesture, she summoned another long, red spear, and hurled it toward Bai Xiaochun.

That spear contained the true power of a deva!

In the same instant that the spear flew out into the air, Bai Xiaochun produced an arrow. It was... the fire soul arrow that had received an elevenfold spirit enhancement! Treating his body like the bow and his arm like the bowstring, he viciously hurled the arrow toward Mistress Red-Dust.

The fire soul arrow pierced through the air with numerous cracking sounds, the shocking golden designs on its surface shining brightly. In the blink of an eye, it reached the red spear, and the two of them collided, unleashing a deafening boom.

Normally speaking, the red spear would have been far too powerful for the fire soul arrow to deal with. However, it was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun shouted, “Detonate!”

Chapter 561: Deva Soul Merger!

When the fire soul arrow exploded, it sent a huge shockwave out in all directions. The long red spear slowed down for a moment, but after completely destroying the arrow, continued on toward Bai Xiaochun.

In the blink of an eye, it slammed into him, causing a boom that shook the entire sepulcher. The walls cracked, the floor shattered, and Bai Xiaochun's 30-meter-tall stone golem form collapsed, revealing his true form.

He was holding his turtle-wok in front of him, coughing up blood as he was flung violently backward. Although he wasn't dead, his internal organs had been crushed, and his bones shattered. Skin and muscle were shredded, and he was left hovering on the brink of death.

Bai Xiaochun chuckled bitterly, his eyes flickering with despair. He was well aware that without his turtle-wok, he would have been killed moments ago. After all, he was facing a deva....

The restorative warmth of the last Godly Vestige Pill he had placed into his mouth earlier was already fading away. He only had one more pill in his bag of holding, which he produced now and put into his mouth.

As of this moment, he was out of tricks. If he was injured again, there would be no recovery. And since he was facing repeated attacks at the hands of Mistress Red-Dust, that meant that he now had no chances at survival.

He had used just about every trick he could think of so far, and all of them were weak at best when used against the power of a deva. And clearly, this Mistress Red-Dust was very insistent on seeing him dead.

Whether it was the deva soul itself, the knowledge he possessed

of how to use such souls, or just the general Wildlands hatred toward him, she had more than enough reasons to want him killed.

The teleportation power was still building up in the sepulcher, but from what Bai Xiaochun could tell, if the battle continued on as it had so far, he wouldn't last until it finished.

"I can't believe he's not dead!!" Mistress Red-Dust thought. She was really starting to go crazy because of how this fight was progressing. She was a deva, and although there were some mitigating factors to explain why she couldn't kill someone in the great circle of the Gold Core stage, if news spread that he had stood up to her over and over again, it would turn her into a laughingstock.

The fact that the wok he had pulled out was capable of blocking her red spear caused Mistress Red-Dust's eyes to glitter. However, she didn't hesitate to once again advance on Bai Xiaochun, her cultivation base surging as she summoned a Dharma idol into being behind her.

It was an enormous head that bore Mistress Red-Dust's features. Devas were vastly more powerful than people beneath them, even without Dharma idols. To summon a Dharma idol would draw significantly on the deva's cultivation base, and would normally only be used when fighting another deva. And yet here, Mistress Red-Dust was so anxious to kill Bai Xiaochun that she didn't hesitate to resort to that method.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the Dharma idol, his eyes turned even more bloodshot than before, and he smiled a mad smile.

"I guess there are no more options now!!"

"There is only one thing left to do to buy time, one chance to hold out until the teleportation begins and I can flee this death trap!!"

“It’s going to force me down a one-way path that I’ll never be able to come back from, but I have to protect my poor little life!! Time to go all out!!”

The madness in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes grew as the idea swirled in his mind; as of this moment, he really didn’t have any other options available.

As Mistress Red-Dust closed in with murder in her eyes, Bai Xiaochun let out a shout and slapped his bag of holding, producing a blue and white jade bracelet.

Immediately, the deva soul inside the bracelet began to shine with scintillating light.

Almost as soon as the bracelet appeared in the open, Mistress Red-Dust seemed to realize what he was thinking of doing, and roared, “How dare you, Bai Xiaochun!!”

At the same time, she picked up speed, reaching back with her right hand to deliver a fierce palm strike. That simple motion caused all of the energy in the entire sepulcher to surge into her palm, which she would then use to crush Bai Xiaochun.

Behind her, the Dharma idol’s eyes glared menacingly, and it began to race toward him.

“You’re forcing me to do this, Harlot Red-Dust!!” he yelled angrily. Even as she neared, he unhesitatingly crushed the jade bracelet!

As the deva soul floated out, a look of despair could be seen in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes as his hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture.

“Deva soul merger!”

Instantly, the deva soul shot toward him, merging into his chest. However, that was when Mistress Red-Dust’s palm arrived, collapsing the air around him, shattering everything, and shoving him backward, blood spraying from his mouth, hair flying around

wildly. His chest caved in, instantly revealing the flesh and blood beneath his flayed skin!

At the same time, shocking fluctuations began to spread out from inside of Bai Xiaochun, and then a double-image of himself appeared, which stepped out in front of him.

It looked exactly like him, as if a second Bai Xiaochun had suddenly appeared!!

“Deva soul clone!” Mistress Red-Dust exclaimed, the killing intent in her eyes growing stronger.

It most definitely was a deva soul clone of Bai Xiaochun, with a complete cultivation base that was virtually exactly the same as Bai Xiaochun’s. His first action was to protectively grab his own true self and flee from Mistress Red-Dust.

The clone was also bleeding and injured, but he gritted his teeth and unleashed all the speed he could muster.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun’s true self didn’t hesitate at all about what to do next. It was a moment of deadly crisis, and Mistress Red-Dust’s fury was blazing, and therefore, he yet again slapped his bag of holding.

“Fudge! Alright, if I’m gonna absorb deva souls, what’s the difference between one and two!? Alright, Red-Dust, you pushed Lord Bai, so he’s gonna push you back. To death!!” Gritting his teeth, he produced the deva soul that Du Lingfei had given him and slammed it down onto his chest, using the prescribed method to instantly absorb it.

“You!! Impossible!!” Mistress Red-Dust’s eyes were wide and her mind was reeling. She almost couldn’t believe what was happening; Bai Xiaochun actually had an additional deva soul!!

“Dammit!!” she growled, her madness growing. She had just unleashed power sufficient to destroy Bai Xiaochun’s true self and clone, and yet, that was when another double-image appeared and

stepped out. Just when the true self and the water clone were on the verge of being shredded to pieces, the flames of their life force flickering on the verge of eradication, a second clone appeared!

This was Bai Xiaochun's fire clone!

The fire clone stood directly in front of the water clone, roaring as he drew upon the full power of his cultivation base and battle prowess to fight back against Mistress Red-Dust....

Only a moment later, blood was spraying out of the fire clone's mouth, and he was bloody and battered. Even his bones were visible, many of them shattered.

However, the time he had bought ensured that Bai Xiaochun's true self was still alive.

"So what if you have two clones? You're still dead!" Mistress Red-Dust was feeling quite humiliated. The battle so far had been quite a blow to her, and she even regretted how she had conducted herself so far. If she had known before that Bai Xiaochun had two deva souls, she would simply have allowed the shafts of light to injure her in exchange for the ability to crush him with her full might!

What left her more flabbergasted than anything, though, was what happened next. Even as the two clones fought back against her with all their power, Bai Xiaochun's true self pulled out another deva soul, this one in the form of a green, jade walnut, which he crushed into his chest.

As soon as he merged with the deva soul, a third clone stepped out! It was none other than a wood clone!

Three clones stood with Bai Xiaochun's true self to defend against Mistress Red-Dust, howling and fighting back with unyielding defiance!

Mistress Red-Dust was herself on the verge of collapsing mentally at the absurd sight in front of her. To her, Bai Xiaochun was like

some sort of freak; not even in her dreams could she ever have imagined that a person like him would have so many deva souls!!

“Impossible! Y-y-you... you have how many deva souls?!?!” Mistress Red-Dust’s heart was in physical pain, and the regret she currently felt went all the way to the deepest level of her being!

Chapter 562: Beast Claw Shreds All!

“I don't care how many deva souls you have,” Mistress Red-Dust shrieked. “I wouldn't care if you had a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul cultivation base! Today is the day you're going to die!” Mistress Red-Dust's face was distorted with such madness that it seemed even her aura was negatively affected. As she yelled, her Dharma idol grew larger, transforming into a sun which began to rumble toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's true self was joined by three clones to fight back against a single deva-level palm strike being delivered by Mistress Red-Dust. With even one less clone, all of them would have been killed in body and soul.

Although death still seemed to be an inevitability, at least they were able to delay that dismal outcome for a bit longer than before.

Thankfully, it was in that very moment that, as the sepulcher collapsed into nothing around them, the teleportation spell formation was completely and fully activated within the sepulcher.

The glow of teleportation began to rise up around everyone present, whether they were in the tunnels, the area surrounding the trials by fire, or in the sepulcher itself!

Anyone and everyone that was still alive was being wrapped up in the teleportation power.

Back in the realm of the trials by fire, the combined efforts of Chen Hetian and everyone else present had resulted in them being able to break the barrier surrounding the void they were in. And yet, to their surprise, the only thing they found beyond that barrier was another void.

However, despair was not in order, as the light of teleportation began to build up around them, leading to sighs of relief on the part of all present.

“We can finally get out of here!”

“Yeah, but considering how enormous the spell formation must be, who knows where we’ll end up afterward....”

“What are you scared of? We're all members of the Holy People, we’ll be fine as long as we end up somewhere in the Wildlands....”

“Heh heh. How do you know we won’t be transported into the lands of Heavenspan...?”

Such talk rose up everywhere within the labyrinth. Everyone was feeling much more relaxed now that the teleportation was beginning.

Of course, the light of teleportation was also there around Bai Xiaochun and Mistress Red-Dust, causing Bai Xiaochun’s expression to brighten, but Mistress Red-Dust’s eyes to blaze with fury.

If Bai Xiaochun got away now, before she had used all the power she had at her disposal, it would be the greatest humiliation of her life. That in itself caused her fury to burn hotter than ever.

“You’re not going anywhere, Bai Xiaochun!!” she screamed. Then her Dharma idol began to pick up speed, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as it closed in on Bai Xiaochun, threatening to turn him and everything around him into nothing more than ash.

The moment that the teleportation light had appeared, Bai Xiaochun had assumed that he’d held out long enough, and finally had hope of surviving. But when he saw the Dharma idol speeding toward him, he suddenly realized that his hope was like a candle flickering in the wind, with that wind being imminent destruction!

“How could I possibly die in this place!?” His eyes were so bloodshot that they were pure crimson, and that included his three clones in addition to his true self. Bai Xiaochun’s true self threw his head back and roared, disregarding all matters of safety pertaining to his cultivation base or his spiritual power. As if this

moment, none of that mattered. If he didn't get past this moment, he would be dead forever!

“Living Mountain Incantation!” shouted his true self. Despite being seriously injured, rumbling sounds surrounded him as he transformed into a 30-meter-tall giant. At the same time, his three clones echoed his words.

“Living Mountain Incantation!!”

“Living Mountain Incantation!!!”

“Living Mountain Incantation!!!!”

All three of the clones transformed into 30-meter-tall stone golems. Then, even as the four stone golems prepared to defend against the incoming attack, the clones joined their voices with his true self's to shout, “Waterswamp... Kingdom!”

Four stone golems performed incantation gestures and then shoved their hands down toward the sepulcher floor, causing the entire area to turn into a watery swamp!

In fact, the borders of the swap seemed to go past the edges of the sepulcher and out into the void beyond, as though this weren't a single Waterswamp Kingdom, but rather, four!!

As the four Waterswamp Kingdoms expanded and then merged into each other, they became a watery swamp that was four times larger than the original!!

That was a huge difference! Almost immediately, a roar erupted out from the Waterswamp Kingdom, as if from ancient times.

The sound alone caused Mistress Red-Dust's face to fall, and was so loud that it reached the locations outside the trials by fire, and the labyrinth as a whole.

“Come forth, my life essence spirit!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, throwing his head back and laughing madly. His voice was a bit hoarse, and he was physically shaking. His cultivation base and life

force were being drained madly, and it was the same with the three clones, and yet, that was when something came out of the watery swamp that did not look like the spikes from before!

Five twisted mountains could be seen, and yet, closer examination would reveal that they were no mountains!

It was the clawed hand of some enormous beast, with talons as pitch black as night!

As the five talons stretched up, it was possible to see further down into the watery swamp, to what appeared to be a forest-like stretch of pitch-black hair, beneath which was green skin!!

However, because of the incredible size of the clawed hand, even a Waterswamp Kingdom that was quadruple its normal size was still not large enough for it to fit through. Only the claws could emerge into the open, where they shot toward the incoming palm and Dharma idol!

Were anyone capable of illustrating this scene, it would have been completely shocking to behold. When the five talons touched the Dharma idol and the palm, it was the palm which began to tremble first, and then collapse into pieces. As for the sun-like Dharma idol, it erupted with radiant light and a powerful shockwave that rippled out in all directions.

Anything that remained of the sepulcher was smashed into rubble and sent spinning into the pitch-black void beyond.

In fact, that made it possible to see Chen Hetian and the others far off in the distance, who had long since noticed what was happening, and were looking on in complete shock.

The shockwave sent Bai Xiaochun stumbling backward, his stone golem form crumbling to reveal his true form.

Blood sprayed out of his mouth as his three clones became white motes of light that spun back into his true self. Bai Xiaochun could tell that all of the clones were seriously injured. Half of his water

clone's body had been destroyed, his fire clone's chest was completely caved in, and worst off was his wood clone, of whom only half a head remained.

Although his true self remained completely intact, he was also severely injured. Most of his bones were crushed, and the majority of his flesh and blood had been destroyed. Even his skull was cracked and on the verge of shattering....

Thankfully, he had used his Living Mountain Incantation right before summoning the Waterswamp Kingdom, otherwise he would have been killed, and not just injured.

He and all of his clones would have been rendered into nothing more than dust!

Bai Xiaochun didn't even have the energy to smile bitterly. His vision was fading, and he couldn't move. He could also sense the flame of his life force teetering on the verge of being extinguished. If he had plenty of time to rest, the power of his fleshly body would ensure that he could recover. But at the moment, he had used every trick in his book, and had nothing left.

Off in the distance, Chen Hetian and the others looked on with gaping jaws. Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan were completely wrapped up in their anxiety, and Chen Hetian's pupils were tiny dots. As for Zhou Yixing, he looked quite excited.

"Your comeuppance is at hand, Bai Xiaochun!" Zhou Yixing hadn't seen Bai Xiaochun's clones, nor had anyone else. Nobody had really been able to see clearly everything that just happened.

It was in that very moment that an incredible rumbling sound filled the entire area. The light of teleportation grew dazzlingly bright, and even before Zhou Yixing could laugh out loud, he began to fade away. So did everyone else.

Bai Xiaochun was finally completely gripped by the power of teleportation, and began to disappear.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Mistress Red-Dust screamed, her hair whipping around her as she took a step forward.

Chapter 563: Vanished Without A Trace

Usually, Mistress Red-Dust was beautiful, with a curvaceous body, the fairest of skin, and entrancing eyes. But right now, she was bedraggled, shaking, and seriously injured. On top of that, she was furious. Never before could she possibly have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would turn out to be so difficult to kill!

She was covered with red welts, the result of trying to fight in the middle of dealing with a curse. For a beautiful woman like her, such a thing was a heavy price to pay.

Although she was confident in being able to dispel the effects of the curse eventually, the pain and numbness she felt because of it right now had her going mad with fury.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” she screamed, her hatred for him taking root in the very marrow of her bones. As of this moment, she could not live under the same sky with him. It didn’t matter that they were still surrounded by the dazzling light of teleportation, the fact that he wasn’t dead yet caused her eyes to shine with insanity as she took another step forward toward him.

She had to kill him before he teleported away!

She could never rest easy with him alive. Before, she had disliked him because of his Soul Convergence Pills and exploding pill furnaces, as well as the general humiliation and pain he had caused to the Wildlands.

Furthermore, the actions of the soul tide and the true spirit in Great Wall City had put a significant dent in her years of accomplishments in the war, which caused further hatred in her heart toward Bai Xiaochun.

However, considering the level of her cultivation base, and the fact that Bai Xiaochun was like a bug beneath her, none of those things had really mattered very much. He would be killed

eventually, and his meddling wouldn't cause any permanent problems for the war effort.

But now, things were different!

If it had been anyone else in that sepulcher, even a Nascent Soul cultivator, they would never have survived in a fight against her.

And yet Bai Xiaochun had!

Not only had he survived, he had left her bruised and injured. Plus, he had revealed the fact that he had three deva souls, a fact that left her completely unsettled.

“He's keeping some big secret, and if he brings it to fruition, then given enough time, he'll be so terrifying that today's events will seem like nothing! He'll bring about disaster after disaster!

“I've already reached the point where I can't live under the same sky as him. How could I possibly let him get away now!?” Gritting her teeth and ignoring the fact that she was already starting to fade away because of the teleportation power, she edged closer to Bai Xiaochun.

Then she reached out with her hand. This was the moment in which she would eradicate him, ending his life once and for all. Only then would she feel at ease. After all, considering how difficult it had been to kill him in this state, if he grew stronger, he would be even more terrifying.

It was a moment of critical danger for Bai Xiaochun. Despite being in the middle of teleportation, with his body fading away, at the current speed with which Mistress Red-Dust was moving, it seemed highly likely that she would strike him before he vanished. Then, it wouldn't matter that he was teleported away; the only thing to be teleported would be a corpse!

In that moment, Bai Xiaochun's listless eyes suddenly sparkled, and he drew upon the last little bit of life force he had left.

He couldn't move his body, and his cultivation base was

completely stagnant. The injuries to his fleshly body were severe. However, he didn't want to die. He wanted to live! There were so many things he had yet to do in life, and to accomplish them, he needed to live forever!!

“I want to live forever! I can't die!!” Roaring inwardly, he closed his two eyes and opened the third eye on his forehead, his Heavenspan Dharma Eye!

Furthermore, it wasn't just his true self who did it. Inside of him, his three clones also opened their Heavenspan Dharma Eyes. The power of four Heavenspan Dharma Eyes merged together and shot out toward Mistress Red-Dust!!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Instantly, control power surged out. Despite the fact that it filled his entire body with intense pain, he ignored that and focused his gaze fully on Mistress Red-Dust!

Rumbling sounds continued as she lurched to a halt. Although she recovered a moment later, that moment was all the time that was needed.

Blood oozed out of Bai Xiaochun's Heavenspan Dharma Eye as the power of teleportation surged. Grabbing the Eternal Parasol just in the nick of time, he vanished.

As for the magical technique that Mistress Red-Dust had just been preparing, it shot through the space that had previously been occupied by Bai Xiaochun, and did absolutely nothing....

“Bai Xiaochun!!” she screamed shrilly, her eyes burning with hatred. Then, a moment later, she also vanished.

At the same time, teleportation light swept through the rest of the labyrinth, causing everyone else to disappear, including Master God-Diviner, Zhao Long, Song Que, and others....

Great Wall cultivators, soul cultivators, and savage giants alike were all whisked away as the labyrinth collapsed, leaving behind

nothing but a huge, sinking crater.

Within that enormous area, the space that had once been created by the nine black pillars of light was replaced by a single white pillar that shot into the sky and then sent ripples out in all directions.

Bai Lin and the Great Wall forces, as well as all the people from the Wildlands, all clearly saw what was happening, and were shaken. Furthermore, all of them very much wanted to know what occurred within the labyrinth.

It wasn't until a month later that everyone came to know about the teleportation spell formation which had been activated, and how everyone inside had been teleported to different parts of the Wildlands!

Some people ended up in areas relatively close to the labyrinth, others were sent deep into the Wildlands, to places where transmission jade slips were useless....

As more and more Great Wall cultivators managed to make it back to Great Wall City, news began to spread about what happened in the trials by fire. Stories of Bai Xiaochun began to be told again, causing the news to resound in Great Wall City and the Wildlands alike....

He had taken 1st place in the trials by fire!

He had been the first to enter the sepulcher!

Later, Mistress Red-Dust also entered the sepulcher, where the two had fought a bitter battle. After the sepulcher collapsed, it was revealed that Bai Xiaochun had apparently survived the fight up to that point!

But then the teleportation began, and as for whether or not he made out alive, nobody knew.

After a second month passed, Mistress Red-Dust increased the reward on Bai Xiaochun's head to an unheard-of level. Five deva

beast souls and one deva soul!

Both the Wildlands and the Great Wall forces were completely shaken. Not even the Great Wall's Execution List had a reward so high.

Bai Xiaochun was now in 1st place on the Wildlands' Execution List!! It was also in that fashion that the Great Wall forces came to realize that Bai Xiaochun was not dead!

Currently, Bai Lin sat in Great Wall city, a melancholy look on his face and an alcohol flagon in hand. Sighing emotionally, he murmured, "As long as you're not dead, Xiaochun, I'm happy. I really let you down this time.... Where are you...?"

End of Book 4: A Different Kind Of Hostage

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